

BRIAR-WREATHS.

BY
CHARLES EDWARD LEWIS.

(SECOND EDITION.)



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Literature

In Nature's mint there is one stint—
there's one alloy—

Seek to possess and you destroy:
When all is well you break the spell,
No more be said, the charm is fled!

(DISENCHANTMENT.)

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JUN 21 1977

. . DEDICATED . .

TO THE

HALLOWED MEMORY

OF A

DEAR AND NOBLE BROTHER,

* GEORGE * HOWARD * LEWIS, *

IN WHOSE

GENIAL AND ESTIMABLE COMPANIONSHIP

THE AUTHOR

IMBIBED MUCH THAT IS MOST WORTHY IN THE
FOLLOWING PAGES.

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DISENCHANTMENT.

(A Satire.)

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BRIAR-WREATHS.*

Disenchantment.

(A SATIRE.)

1.

Alas, OUR DAY, that dawns so bright
How soon we enter on the night,
When the tortured spirit of those most blest
Crave, as a boon, eternal rest.

2.

As but a child, so like a fool
The most of our morning goes for school,
And of Life's precious tide, as it ebbs and flows,
Quite half is spent in blank repose.

* Wreaths of smoke from a briar-wood pipe. Kindly note that the propitiating spirit evoked through this medium may be presumed to have hovered about the writer of these pages from beginning to end.

▲

3.

And though our day-dream promise fair
How prophetic the vision of that snare,
Where better nature's better heart
Is beset by its viler counterpart.

4.

Trained to the Ethics of hide and seek,
Dissimulation matures its brazen cheek,
And in a world so full of craft
To be artless is to be daft.

5.

Though living, as we do, in a Paradise,
We're all so blind, so full of strife,
It's only a glimpse, a taste, obtained
Of all we've seen and all we've gained.

6.

Joys in store, forsooth! they're what beguile
To cheat us as a juvenile,
And promised delights! they're only meant
To tease old age when youth is spent.

7.

And Love ? Ah, a rainbow mist where sunbeams play
 On a desert thirst—a mirage gay !
 A Tantalus, for whose flowing bowl
 We'd bankrupt body, mind, and soul.

8.

Even a Love that is most lavish,
 'Tis not enough but we must ravish,
 And of all the pleasures that we feel
 We give the preference to those we steal.

9.

What we want, though all supplied,
 Is that something-else denied,
 And for that we seek to find
 Is all our happiness undermined.

10.

'Tis not what we need, but what we crave
 That makes the richest of us slave,
 And as each trophy's reached at last
 It turns to ashes in our grasp.

11.

Nay, when the bloom is on the peach,
'Tis then too far beyond our reach,
And what the Fates denied before
Is now found rotten at the core.

12.

Ah, much that we're striving to obtain
'Twere better, far, that we abstain,
And much that we see as we go by,
'Twere better, far, we let it lie.

13.

In that sweet image Fashion forms,
'Tis as the verdure that adorns,
And those wintry trunks if left alone
Were little better than bark and bone.

14.

Our joys, our emotions, all are lined
With the seams they leave behind,
And the very smiles that light our eyes
Are only wrinkles in disguise.

15.

How sweet the laugh that all does win!
 Aye, but it leaves a puckered skin.
 And in those orbs where mirth appears
 How plain the trace of blinding tears!

16.

Nay, admire the beautiful in all you see,
 But keep along and let it be,
 The fruit may be luscious, let it alone,
 If you pluck the plum you gather the stone.

* * * *

17.

In Nature's mint there is one stint—
 there's one alloy—
 Seek to possess and you destroy :
 When all is well, you break the spell,
 No more be said, the charm is fled !



GARRET MUSING.

(In Letter Form.)

Garret Musing.

(IN LETTER FORM.*)

MY DEAR A——,

I can imagine your surprise in opening up this enclosure to find it in print. The explanation of this is that the whim, you might call it, took me the other day to invest in a type-writing machine, and being, as I am very largely, a mere creature of impulse, I straightway went and bought one, this writing to you being my first attempt to utilise it.

What started me, I think, towards the attainment of the very pretty piece of mechanism by which I am now able to transcribe my thoughts was my desire to

* To A.R.L.

overhaul a large bundle of what it may seem a trifle aspiring in me to call "MS." But call it, what is, perhaps, more appropriate, "scribbling," or otherwise, I have a number of compositions on various subjects, and thought I would like to see how they would look put into something like ship-shape.

Between ourselves, you would probably be still more surprised, too, if I told you, as is indeed the case, that I have even gone so far, in my more mellow moods, as to attempt poetry! I don't know what set me to rhyming, as I have no liking for poetry of any sort, and never had.

Notwithstanding this, however, it may be just as well to ascertain what others may think about my crude but sparing efforts in this mode of expression, and possibly I may decide later on to send you one or two samples as a feeler, and for the benefit of your opinion,

though I've no serious motive in their production.*

You doubtless know my habits too well to be astonished at my change of address ; it is quite recently, as I'm only just getting settled in my new abode, this time making "Ye Olde Citie of Chester" my new choice. It is a better house and location than any I have had thus far, though at a very moderate rental, and I promise myself very considerable comfort ; at the same time, the situation being in the midst of the Cheshire hunting country, that, too, is another important consideration, as for many years I have made fox-hunting (in a mild way) my chief diversion.

I was pleased the other day to hail the advent of a fresh letter from you, and as these silent missives always put me in a responsive mood, I have sought

* All the verses found in this book are of the author's own composition, and are submitted with no little anxiety regarding their reception.

for that purpose the congenial seclusion of a top room. This is a favourite resort of mine, away up in the humble attic, from whose ivy-clad window there is a grand view of the Welsh mountains, with the far-famed slopes of grand old Hawarden away off to the right.

And there am I now taking in a goodly scope of landscape, but in a far-off listless sort of way, betokening thoughts and objects far removed from the land of the Cymric, as indeed they are, communing with my constant friend and good brother in the colonial paradise of the mic-mac, the musk-rat, and beaver. And there, too, while thanking him for his never-failing attentions to me, it will be a relief to give expression to some of the thoughts and feelings which, being so much alone, and having nothing else to do, take such exclusive possession of my mind.

Socially speaking, I am taken somewhat at a disadvantage, in writing this or

any other letter to one who, though so near of kin, I am so rarely in touch with ; and with so meagre a blend of associations I am denied the gossipy chit-chat which goes so far to leaven intercourse and to make up the sweet-meats of daily companionship.

This being the case, it leaves me, as, indeed, I am only too prone to do generally, to fall back on the heavy, the "salt-horse" reflections, so to speak, of more sombre rumination. And then, even, in a rather too confident effort to be "deep," to show I can touch bottom, as we used to say in our boyhood swims, I'm sadly liable, I know, to miss my footing, and thereby make my effort rather more distressing than interesting. But this objectionable feature, I think you will admit, applies to other writers besides me. Then, again, I must confess what it is more than likely you already know:—that is to say, I am too much alone, and think and ponder too much in

solitude to be, as a writer, an accurate exponent of the idiosyncrasies, the merits, and demerits of persons and things, which not only I may seem to set myself up as being, but others also who labour under the same disability, and don't appear to know it. Nay, it is rather like the case of an artist who essays to take a person's portrait from memory; when he has done, the result may be a clever and an admirable production, save with one material drawback—it has become a "*study*," a very fine one, perhaps, but most probably a very bad likeness.

But, acushla! here am I drifting into deep waters, to begin with, and starting to wrestle with intricate problems, instead of trying to write you something light and cheerful. Well, you must admit I told you so. I knew how it would be; it couldn't be otherwise. I've no news, no tattle, no gossip. I begin to fear that this effort of mine must turn out all solid head-work and no nonsense, thought

out in an absent-minded, reflective sort of way that would make a casual onlooker think I was a peaceable maniac. Then, away goes my machine—rat, tat, tat—and, PRESTO ! ideas emerging from the vague chaos of hidden thought appear presently clearly outlined in PRINT.

I have said I have *no news*, and, in a certain sense, I'm glad I have none. I would like to write this missive (and it is likely to be a pretty long one) just as I feel. That is in a companionable, speculative kind of way—largely as an acknowledgment of your many favours, and also as an ebullition of good feeling, which, I have the satisfaction of knowing, will be amply reciprocated by the one to whom it is addressed. I say I am glad I have no news, because at my time of life one is apt to become a trifle nervous, not to say apprehensive, about what may have occurred or may happen to himself or others. And with the list of casualties—not to mention annoyances—ever on

the increase, and growing each day more serious and trying, it is not surprising that we get to live in the same dread of possibilities that the impecunious do of "duns." You will see by this that I am growing less curious and more sceptical—aye, insomuch, even, that now the spicy little visitor christened "news" no longer finds me the ardent admirer I once was, and must needs knock at the door a pretty long while before it's opened by me. NAY, I no longer "jump" for news. And, to further clothe this tender IDEA about news—which has just been born, so to speak—I may add to the wee mite of mental offspring by remarking, furthermore:—That the settlings of numberless generations of human experience bearing on this and some other sensitive points, which have passed the ordeal—been boiled down, sugared off, as it were—have resulted in an amazing variety of more or less bilious extracts, one class of which, anglicised, "spells" proverbs. In this manner there is one pinch of

wisdom conveyed to us through that quasi-negative device which proclaims that "NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS." There you have my case all in a nutshell. And yet, while it may suit the nature of my complaint, I do not recommend it to others. As logic, it is rotten ; as an asseveration, it contradicts itself ; and as an outgrowth of wisdom, it might be called a "bull" of Irish nationality.

The fact is, my dear boy, whether it be wise or otherwise, the older we get, the stronger we cleave to what is, in preference to what MIGHT BE. Nor is it always that we are in love with things as they are—far from it. But, while fantasy may, and all too frequently does, paint fairer pictures than those we have, and depicts many more pleasing and seemingly more propitious changes, nevertheless we get to know, somehow, that all shifts are penalised, or, in other words—

"'Tis better to bear the ills we have
Than flee to others we know not of."

Thus, with a good many of us, as with sailors, unless forced by some special emergency to alter our course—to “claw off,” so to speak—we are constrained to stick to the old track, the old routine, and continue on in the landlocked haven of real or fancied security. This feeling regarding the risk of change to their personal well-being affects people the same in political and national affairs. As with the individual, so with the statesman; he, too, shrinks from that turbulent, mystic sea outside the bar, and, dreading to venture, rides passively, even though complainingly, by the sheet-anchor of stoical, rut-bound conservatism.

As opposed to this, our necessities—a “lee shore”—may, and very often do, require us to make a shift, “slip our cable,” hoist sail, and take to broader, and, as it very often turns out, more prolific waters. This alternative, with a nation, not infrequently means revo-

lution—reform ; and with an individual, enterprise—progress.

Ah, but I fear you will prick up your ears at this, and think how solemn and didactical my writing is getting to be, and what heavy shot I'm using to knock over small game ! And that, too, without any seeming regard for your choice of subjects or your powers of endurance. But I prithee wait a while and bear with me yet a little longer. It is an absolute necessity for me to get rid of some of those double charges. Besides, I find that new machine of mine rather an incentive and a provocation in the way of firing off volleys. Bear up, do, that's a good fellow ! It may seem hard—an imposition, almost—to ask you to do so ; but no, 'tis not. You are a faithful friend, a long-suffering companion. I would not "sit" on you for the world ! Please bear in mind, too, that one especially divine attribute of friendship is its beautiful and humane

propensity to suffer, on occasion, for its corresponding affinity—it can't be sublime for nothing—so you see I couldn't help you, even if I would. Nay, you must brace up. I'll ease the strain all I can—I'll reduce the current—I'll lessen the number of "volts," so when you find the "shock" too strong you may let go. And with this comforting assurance I beg you will allow me to proceed.

Well, then, to take up the thread where I dropped it, and recurring to the time-worn simile of the death-dealing strand. I believe it often happens, even when we don't know, when it would be a most desirable thing to "claw off," and that there would be a lot of good in so doing beyond the averting of threatened disaster.

In the case of the mariner, his duty is plain, and his training indicates just what to do ; but with others it is different, and they may be "all at sea" in their

perplexity, not knowing what move to make, if any at all.

Now, then, it is in these emergencies—these possibly turning points in our career—that those much dreaded necessities most often assail us, like an adverse land-fall. Not, however, as lamentable conditions imposed by fate (as they are commonly regarded) but rather, let us presume, as kindly though imperative mandates, compelling us, as it were, to activity and to such wholesome observances as are requisite to safeguard our interests and welfare.

As a practical application of this let us assume, for instance, that some one of us has come into sufficient means to enable him to live for some time without work. He remains idle and practically useless until a seemingly untoward event (loss of property or what not) occurs to make him shake off his inertia and resume his occupation or make one.

As another example, my own case is not far amiss. From all I have heard on the subject, I have latterly come to the conclusion that the Sandwich Islands offer exceptional advantages for business enterprise. Well, I've done thinking enough on the question of making a trial of that lovely tropical ELDORADO to have gone there, established a "plant," and perhaps obtained a flourishing position. But, like the celebrated Wouter Van Twiller, after spending about a year and a half in solemn deliberation I find I've only reached the preliminary stage of passive approval ; whereas if the call had been urgent I would have started at once.

But you may say in reply to this, " You have means to live after a fashion, why should you seek a vocation ? Why invoke the uncertainties of a long journey to this or that place with a view to an opening, hazarding health, property, and social enjoyments, all, in the possibly vain effort to accomplish what you went for ?"

Well, my answer to that is this : If it is money that you are after, and you possess money already, the object would seem to be wanting in incentive and purpose. Notwithstanding this, however, it is just as well that we should bear in mind, even then, that *THE TROPHY IS NOT IN THE POSSESSION OF MONEY BUT IN THE EARNING OF IT !* And this wholesome qualification applies as strongly to the *MILLIONAIRE* as to the *PAUPER*.

Again, "what about going off to Australia, America, New Zealand ; what about discarding a moderate situation, quitting one's own country, say, for another, apparently offering a much better prospect ?" why, my opinion is if you are doing fairly well where you are stay there, by all means. If, too, age and infirmity are beginning to overtake you, remain where you are, and be thankful it is no worse. But, without this drawback, this disability, then I say, "Clear the ship for action, and fling your banner to the breeze !"

The fact is, my dear boy, we humans, all—young and old, male and female—require constant occupation, and about as near real hard work as the “stint” necessary to obtain a subsistence implies, to properly regulate our existence. At any rate, this accords with my observation and experience. You see, idleness has a malign tendency to indolence and ennui, with the very natural result that the victim—the “lotus eater”—who is so commonly envied the privilege (?) becomes an easy prey to that most beastly enemy to both health and happiness—STAGNATION!

With those who have “means,” we may observe, various expedients, chiefly of the entertainment and diverting kind, are resorted to to guard against, or at least to mitigate the mischievous effects of a do-nothing mode of life. Some of these more pretentious ones affect occupation, and even profess to accomplish great things—always in a bustling and

demonstrative manner—and to listen to their overdrawn accounts of themselves, their hardships, and their doings generally, a simple, credulous-minded person might stand in awe, wondering how such a disinterested and prodigious display of industrial effort might not be bearing even nobler and more abundant fruit than the more vulgar grist of mere hire and wage.

Now, while referring to these cases by way of illustration, it may be difficult to avoid a certain amount of disparagement, one need not necessarily detract very much from any estimable regard inspired by a class of well-to-do people whom it might seem unkind to call "busybodies." At the same time, unless I am greatly mistaken, these are, as a rule, the most bitterly complaining of all persons. Their stories to their friends, too, how the *real workers* impose on them, shirk their duties, or what not, would challenge sympathy, only that one

makes the customary allowance for them on the same good-natured principle that he would overlook any superfluous zeal exhibited by an individual—man or woman—who honestly deemed it his or her duty to “teach ducks how to swim.”

Nay, these people may be, in a majority of cases, not wanting in energy nor in a commendable desire to help on in “good works.” Nevertheless, true to the drift of these observations, I think it may be assumed, without much fear of contradiction, that the person who does not require to exert himself will not find the *strain* of a self-imposed task sufficiently onerous or self-denying to entail either a flattering remuneration or present a shining example of virtue’s reward.

And here let us reverse the lens of our inquisitive little bull’s-eye, and see what a judicious modification of its searching

rays may reveal, in a casual way, concerning the writer. Please don't think from the nature of my remarks, so far, that I am in a bad humour, or that I've got what the Yankees call "the big head." No, it's not a case of indigestion either—there you're all wrong again—as a crotchety old acquaintance of mine used to say when I happened to bid him "good morning" at the wrong end of the day. "Blue devils?" No: they are the only sort of devil I believe in; at the same time it always seemed to me anything but a compliment to a man's resources to entertain *them*.

Not to keep you in suspense any longer, however, and knowing full well your kindly consideration for others, I will frankly admit it's a bad case. Of course we all know that "murder will out," and so now I'm bound to tell you that for many, many months past, I've been engaged in a mean low kind of butcher business. And though the crime

associated therewith, and of which my conscience accuses me is not of an atrocious nature, nevertheless its a case of killing, aye killing, TIME ! Now while this may not be looked upon by most people as a very serious offence, I would like to impress it on the mind of anyone who may be disposed to excuse it too thoughtlessly and impulsively, that *killing time*, in cold blood, is not, even though regarded in the most friendly way, the most elevating or exhilarating of employments ; and, with me, many of those more sturdy hours and days, and even the tiny minutes, squirm long and die hard, so to speak.

Of course I am not without my own excuses in this matter. You know that for some years past I have been accustomed to a great deal of horse-back riding, and now I find "hoofing it" a tame and unsatisfactory substitute. You see I had a severe touch of—what shall I call it—*economics* awhile ago, and in a

praiseworthy effort to curtail expenses, found it convenient to dispense with my horse. Have hired one occasionally since then, but now my "Gee-gee" is gone, the fox-hunting is over, the hounds are silent, and with only a languid interest in the events which characterize the "dog days," the question "what next" seems rather more obtrusive than interesting. I don't mean to infer that I have yielded weakly to the demon Despondency, but rather that I've not yet quite "caught on" to the milder forms of excitement entailed by the summer solstice, and would seem, indeed, to be lacking zeal and energy, at least for the time being, to take fervently and resolutely to the change from a robust participation in winter sports, to the serener contemplation of summer glades.

And what a change it is !—from the stirring horn of the hunter; the far-echoing "tally-ho"; the rush of horsemen, and the mad flight of that brilliant

cavalcade — to the cuckoo - call ; the cattle-cry ; the murmuring breeze, and all those blending notes of beast and bird which harmonize the latter scene.

Now, instead of the thrilling spectacle of mimic war presented by the chase, one finds himself regarding absently, pensively, the unfolding of leafy June, the advent of the swallow and the primrose, or listlessly overlooking the progress of vegetation in and about the neighbouring fields. And yet another drawback to the genteel vocation of killing time, and one which may account in no small measure for any vexation or depression of spirit exhibited in this writing—we have had a record season for wet weather. As a rule I don't object to a reasonable number of "mackerel skies," and even frequent showers do not disturb my serenity—they are cooling and refreshing ; but latterly it has rained all the time. So far, then, as I am concerned (mind you, I don't implicate others, who may think and

feel differently), this most objectionable surplus of an otherwise good thing—this drenching water-spout perpetually hovering over one's head, is, with all due regard from whence it comes, an inconvenient accompaniment to outdoor exercise, not to mention more extended tours. It keeps one housed too much of the time ; or, if he venture abroad, leaves him, all too often, stuck in the mud, or propped against a tree, abiding the very gradual passing of a local shower.

I am not, as you know, of a complaining disposition, and insomuch as my personal relations with an all-wise provision may be unduly influenced, perhaps prejudiced, by a mere carnal sense of bodily discomfort, it ill befits me, or anyone else, to find fault with the weather. But, while I am a devoted admirer of Nature in all her moods, at such a time, and in such a place, I trust I may be forgiven if those trickling streamlets down my neck were insufficient

provocation for making that peaceful
arbour—"Where the woodbine twineth"
—a profane precinct.

It was in some such predicament, the
other day, that I took to ruminating on
my early teaching bearing on the situation
in which I found myself. Since then
my weather religion is permanently bereft
one blooming dogma, viz.: "A RAINBOW
AT NIGHT IS THE SAILOR'S DELIGHT!"
Right there, under that tree, I repeated
the tuneful couplet—a rainbow at night
is the sailor's delight—until the ruby
jingle took full possession of my
thoughts, and painted lurid ribbons on
the darkling clouds over my head.

This rather pleasing deception con-
tinued for some time, till presently,
REASON, the true Lord of Light, began to
dawn on the situation. A mere flickering
at first, then a broader beam pierced the
obscuraton, and very soon quenched all
the radiance in the sky. Yes, and with

it went all my preconceived respect and adoration for the time-hallowed imposture I had so long entertained.

In other words: For the first time in all these long years that I have lived, I began thinking the case over. "Said I to I": "A rainbow at NIGHT" (with particular stress on night)—then all at once the TRUTH flashed through a rift in the inky firmament! I shouted; I jumped a foot or two right up into the air; I clapped my arms, like a rooster, in sheer exultation! Then, I gave my hat a spiteful knock, flung down my umbrella, and subsided—chagrined and humiliated! "A rainbow at night," I vociferated (this time disdainfully), "why, what a credulous old duckling I've been to have taken it seriously, dem it, it's a JOKE!" Aye, for who would be such an ASS as to expect to SEE a rainbow at NIGHT!

I trust you will make the proper allowance for the way I put things, and

please not to put too much stress on what I have said about "killing time." I am an inveterate reader, for one thing, at least so far as my eyes will allow me, and enjoy it immensely. I must admit, however, that novels have lost their fascination for me, if, indeed, they ever had any. There's too much of the "old, old story" about them, and, when you think of it, it really does seem puerile to see a man or woman sit in one corner of a room and sugar-off so-called "literary" bonbons—or shall we say invent lies—for some other old boy to gorge himself with in another corner. The exaltation of Dadda's knee, and the crescent of family rose-buds bending round a blazing fire, the wintry winds roaring, and the elfish gables shrieking and howling outside—this was indeed superb. But the anguish, the interminable variations harped on "Treasure Island," and "Love's young Dream," have lost their spell for me; at the same time, you must remember that age 49 is, alas, become a compulsory

spectator, not to be so personal as to suggest "sour grapes."

Of course I make some exceptions in this very sweeping disclaimer. Amongst a few others, the works of Charles Lever interest me exceedingly, and I have no hesitation in claiming him as my favourite author.

Apropos of him, I shall not soon forget a pleasant afternoon spent by me at the seaside, not long since, with no other companion than "Davenport Dunn."

This book, judging from the difficulty I had in procuring it, is seldom seen or asked for (as is, indeed, the case with all the older writers now-a-days); nevertheless, it reads, to my mind, like one of Lever's best. Dunn, himself, as the astute schemer and daring speculator, commands one's rapt attention throughout; and, certainly, the strong unique personality of the redoubtable "Grog Davis" would be

hard to beat, even though you searched the whole range of character creations.

Anent the decadence of these writers, who not so long ago passed away, it is a mournful commentary on the fickleness of even acquired and acknowledged FAME to note how soon it, too, follows the way of all things perishable with naught to reverence its exit but coldness and neglect. Ah, and how vigorously, how exultantly we ring the joy-bells when their places are taken, as oftentimes they are, by comparative PIGMIES!

Considering the relative merits of the old and the new writers, how many of the latter actually take precedence to-day whose works can in nowise compare with men of the LEVER calibre, and the brighter lights of the early half of this century. And yet they are preferred, while the old ones lie on back shelves quite tabooed by the younger generation, and only resorted to as a most unwelcome makeshift by one

and all. The fact is, we no longer read for instruction, but for amusement ; and this explains why we prefer "She cometh up as a Flower" and "Red as a Rose is She" to "Guy Mannering" and "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

We are not wanting in discrimination and intelligence, and yet we must admit that in the deluge of highly-seasoned fiction which has flooded the book world, it is clearly manifest that the older writers are being largely overwhelmed. And so it is that those more colossal trunks which, up to a recent period, distinguished and outlined the deeper channels of thought, are gradually toppling over, and if not absolutely overturned, and swept away, are virtually fast disappearing from sight.

A conspicuous example of the truth of this is presented by that erstwhile prince of story-tellers, and now dilapidated old derelict, WALTER SCOTT. Aye, and

with him may soon be included, alas! many others like him: not the least of these being the father of RIP VAN WINKLE, and that other even more brilliant one, the progenitor of dear old "LEATHER STOCKING"!

If we look for the reason for this, it will take very little discrimination to see that it is very largely owing to the all-prevailing craze for what may be called newspaper "stews," made up of a re-hash of so-called current events, served all smoking and steaming from the spluttering editorial grill, and those other tit-bits of mere invention—especially the hot-muffin literature hawked about by enterprising publishers, catering to morbid appetites, vitiated tastes, and effete minds!

Now this language of mine, this very sweeping charge against my fellow survivors, may seem a trifle strong. But while I still stand firm to my convictions, I must frankly confess that there was

something in the noisy construction of those last few sentences which aroused me (and not for the first time, either) to a more lively sense of my personal responsibility, and my own meagre and faulty knowledge and qualifications. Ah, and it also reminded me of the object I started out with in the writing of this paper to my good chum Albert.

With reference to the first suggestion, regarding my undoubtedly sweeping indictment of the reading public, and those who cater for it, if wrong, I should be only too glad to be so convinced, and to acknowledge my error. Nay, but, if it be true, am I not in this, as in other portions of my writings, taking too much on myself, and showing myself unbecomingly assertive? In reference to this point, I would like to say that, in the reading of this paper or my books by anyone so kindly disposed, there is one thing (amongst, probably, many others) that may expose itself to criticism and

blame, even if it does not call for an apology ; I refer to what might seem *egotism* on my part. It is, perhaps, needless for me to say that I hate the word and all it implies ; and, still, it hectors me like an insect, insomuch that it would seem to insinuate the virus of its horrid imputation, and make it inherent in all my compositions.

Now, then, dear boy, a truce to questionable dissertation, and more for old chum's sake. As you are so often at me about what I am doing, what about yourself ? And, first, let me tell you I would like to see some work from your pen—I mean in book form. Ah ! if I—there comes in that irrepressible “I” again, and it is not a “bull’s-eye” either. Well, as I was about to say, if I had your education, your abundant flow of pure English, and the sparkling, gushing source whence it springs, I would fain find a flue that would turn a wheel. In my case, although I may not complain of Nature

that she has slighted me, unlike you, I am as a dam without a proper flume—(now, please don't misconstrue this poor simile to make it seem funny)—and I have often observed the same thing amongst men of the labouring class. Comparatively speaking, they dribble a bit from the surface only, but the latent powers of mind which many possess are much deeper down, and, except in rare instances, they lack the *modus operandi* to make the pressure a driving element. Education is a potent provision in this respect, supplying, as it does, or should do, an indispensable, though a largely artificial, requisite; and this you yourself, as a college graduate, must of course possess in its highest elaboration.

Ah! how prolific must be the materials at the beck and call of a person who has spent so many years of his life in reading and study! What range of thought must be his who has gleaned and garnered that rich harvest of ancient and modern lore

which may be possessed and enjoyed only by the votaries of the CLASSICS, the ARTS and SCIENCES ! Aye, tutored by men who are themselves masters of UNIVERSITY CRAFT, and who have attained the highest honours in the gift of their ALMA MATER !

That there are stronger men, both mentally and physically, in the lower than in the higher walks of life, I verily believe ; but wanting that most powerful auxiliary, EDUCATION, IGNORANCE damns them to a fallow field. Nature has endowed them bountifully ; they are, as a rule, well timbered, but in their futile waste of energy, in their attempts to achieve better things, it is painfully evident that their FULCRUM is awry, and stands in need of that cultured adjustment necessary to afford them powerful leverage.

Mind you, I don't mean by education, erudition ; a person may be erudite and still be practically helpless ; in which

case it is simply an example of learned paralysis resulting from over "cram." But what I do mean is such mental training, and such cultivation of the faculties, as best favour their general development. Afterwards the student himself, with the more intelligent appreciation of his gifts of mind, may persevere with that especially favoured one which he finds to be his inclination or his forte.

However this may be, there are always two sides to every case ; and in this one the question insinuates itself : " What is the most desirable object possibly attainable in this life ? "

The answer, in two words, is, " HEALTH, HAPPINESS ! "

And, again, " Does education and the higher cultivation of the faculties tend to the attainment, the preservation, of these two most felicitous and most desirable of all human conditions ? "

If the reply to this be limited to one word, then the all-significant lessons of experience constrain one to answer in the negative—"No." And if this be correct, it is undoubtedly a serious qualification of the anticipated reward for studious exertion—a penalty, it would almost seem, inherited from the too inquiring disposition of "Mother Eve."

But a "truce" to all these profitless, tiring speculations, and, no doubt, had you been within speaking distance, I should have heard from you ere this in some such speech as "Hold, enough!"

As it is, I have spun out longer than I intended, and the fabric is much heavier than I had thought of producing. But, please, don't be too severe. I was feeling a trifle heavy myself when I began, but now that I have got rid of a very considerable burden of rusty rumination, I'm feeling much lighter, especially my *head*.

And now to edge our chairs up a little closer to one another, and be sociable. You were good enough not long since to inquire about my health. Thanking you for your kind solicitude, I am sorry to confess I've not been very well these last few months. Aside from the ailment that has troubled me for many years, in consequence of the wet weather and excessive dampness, it is extremely difficult to avoid colds. Of these I've had my full share, and a bronchial affection to which I am subject has been much more troublesome than ever before. I don't think I've had what is called "Influenza," but probably something very nearly akin to it, and though never so bad as to make me feel right-down ill, it goes and comes, causing me to cough, and sneeze, and blow my nose to that extent as to cause me to fear at times for the soundness and stability of my internal construction.

By the way, this reminds me that I was thinking over the subject of the

respiratory organs the other day, and called to mind a rather unique observation I once heard made by someone somewhere in reference to a man who had, or thought he had, something wrong with his "wind." It has been so long ago I've forgotten all but the "point," so must try and make up the words as best I can; more especially as I would very much like to produce something in the way of a little story to put alongside your "Irishman who spoke in Two Voices." But when I speak of a story I must caution you beforehand not to expect anything in the nature of wit or merriment; the incident as it will appear being one of a pathetic cast, and I need not say I've seen and taken too many hard knocks to dispose me to make light of human suffering.

The point I speak of was a personal one, and interested me, not that it was clever in any way, but rather as illustrating the vagaries of the human mind

concerning its more material adjunct, the body. In this instance our poor unfortunate hero, if we may call him so, after many trials and tribulations, egged on by "high medical authority," finds himself temporarily located in that prospective Gilead for pulmonary affection yecept "COLORADO."—A rugged and sterile region in the Far West, to which, it may safely be presumed, the harassed health-pilgrim cleaves, with an ardent desire to live, and soon becomes, from the nature of his surroundings, equally resigned to die.

By the way, just why a locality which commends itself by one salubrious quality must needs labour under the customary disability that characterises all its other attributes is (as that lipping fool, Lord Dundreary, used to say) "one of those things no fellah can understand." But so it is, and so it was with our friend, Mr. Hope-to-get-robust, who had reached this delectable abode only a few days before "our story opens."

He had gone through the customary agonising ordeal preliminary to his arrival here. Indeed, for some considerable time anterior to this he had been haunted—nay, ruthlessly pursued—by the spectral conviction that his lungs were affected.

On the first intimation of so dire a calamity, with, perhaps, no greater provocation than the after effects of a bad cold, he had gone and knocked up his doctor, who looks him over, listens gravely to his pathetic tale of vague alarm, and proceeds to make his “diagnosis” as appalling as possible.

Then, after a protracted course of treatment, in which the poor victim is made unmistakably ill, and after being “bled” by said M.D. of sufficient legal tender to buy a new horse and brougham for self and family, this “good Samaritan” (with a view to doing his nether colleague, the undertaker, a

convenient turn) hands him over to a "specialist." This person terrorises him out of another five hundred odd, and bundles him off to UBEDAM—a noted health resort celebrated for its ozone, and located, as its name rather too suggestively implies, somewhere amongst the sand barrens of the alkali West.

It was at this crucial phase, then, of a life badgered by professional experiment, and harassed by the morbid horrors of seemingly irrepressible doom, that he is met one morning by a near and dear friend, and the cheerful salutation that greets him is—

"Hullo, old chappie, how are you? Awfully glad to see you. What's the best word?"

The reply, after much gesticulation and dumb show, issues forth in a faint sepulchral whisper—

"B-a-d—v-e-r-y b-a-d."

Then another social assault on the part of the confounded friend—

“Great Scott ! Dreadful sorry to hear it. But what the deuce is the matter ?”

At this profane blast of roughly-spoken but kindly inquiry, the victim of pulmonary mania all but collapses. Then, bracing himself, for old chum’s sake and his own justification, he articulates, if anything, lower than before—

“It’s here” (pointing to a tolerably well-filled shirt-front); “Doctor says, left lung gone—can’t live long !”

An ominous silence follows this heart-rending avowal, and then, again—

“Je-ru-sa-lem ! I am grieved and astonished to hear it can be so bad as that, old fellow. *But what about the other lung ?*”

The answer to this timely inquiry is as startling as unexpected in its effect on the anxious friend. It comes loud and full as the resonant tones of a squadron commander, and echoes far and near like the triumphant blast of a bugle note.

“O-o-o-h-h-h! The doctor says THAT’S ALL RIGHT!”

As I have said, only the words of this story are of my own contriving ; the gist of it came from another source, so far back I can only remember the point.

I have very little more to add, now, beyond the proffer of my benediction and to remind you to give my kindest regards to all the members of your interesting family, not omitting my special devoirs to the “Mother of the Gracchi.”

Now, too, that I think of it. Please tell the fair Louise that I have the song book I promised her, all nicely bound

with her name on the back, and will bring it over when I come this fall.

Apropos of the above pleasing and melodious mission, do you know it is a lasting source of regret to me to feel I'm such a stranger to music, though not an alien altogether; for even as it is I sometimes, when I am feeling a bit "blue," get out my old flute, with, however, the somewhat unsatisfactory result of making myself more so.

And yet, notwithstanding the anguish of my endeavours to propitiate this to me most alluring of all the Muses, I see no falling off, I'm glad to say, in my appreciation of "Annie Laurie," "Ben Bolt," or of "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep."

It may be with some slight touch of pride that I feel my partiality and devotion as respects those dear old songs remain undiminished, unimpaired, though,

in common with others, I may not claim this in any way as a merit, but as a boon. In my case, at any rate, those priceless treasures of English ballad lore which happily defy all exclusive possession or proprietorship, (as if steeped in a Lethe peculiarly their own), remain with me, I'm thankful to know, unaffected, uncontaminated by the many grosser disillusionments which have assailed my later life.

With me, lacking as I do, and as many do, the hand that can play and the voice that can sing, it might seem as if Nature would not need to go much further to complete this partial deprivation, and make me not only dumb but deaf and indifferent to all things musical. But, speaking from my own experience, the effect seems all the other way. Nay, one may even go so far as to say how much more highly appreciated by the practically mute one, on account of this very disability, is the expression of harmony at all times. And beyond this

how welcome that special dispensation, in default of tongue or skill of hand, as to make him the more keenly susceptible to the performance of others ; or, barring this opportunity, that he may enjoy the next best thing, which is *to dream in song*. What I mean by dreaming in song is that felicitous faculty which enables those least favoured in person or circumstances to recall at will those plaintive "AIRS" which, though *soundless*, still do they, notwithstanding, melodize our thoughts and charm our senses. Thus, though we be really "Rocked in the cradle of the deep," buffeted by wind and wave, they find an opening and a hearing in a manner all their own (do these dulcet ministers), and beguile us with their melodious wiles into the pleasing deception that we are listening to a serenade. 'Tis then, in a manner understood by all, though difficult to explain, they come to us wherever we may be—do those Annie Lauries, those Kathleen Mavourneens, those Mollie Darlings—and though they find us in

mid-ocean, riding out a gale, or in the stillness of an arctic solitude, they come, and they even greet us with a full choral accompaniment. And then (while appearing as we may to others in what is termed "a brown study") we listen and drink in a music played by invisible fingers on heart-strings made resonant with the love and affection which they inspire, and vibrating to the touch of the very spirit which they invoke!

Nay, on occasions such as these it does not seem, it cannot be, all a sentimental hallucination—that impulse of our better nature which stirs our sympathy for "Poor Old Joe," or that re-lights the darkened window of "Our Old Kentucky Home." It is true the bloom and mirth have long since vanished from the rosy cheek and ruby lip that tempted us, and yet how almost playfully we cling to the thought, of how it all came to happen "Comin' thro' the Rye." And, again, with the less fortunate and seeming

faithless one, what a token of fidelity may be still cherished in that crumpled nosegay, though "'Tis but a little faded Flower!" Ah! and shall we ever forget that moonlit eve when we said "Good Bye, Sweetheart!" Nay, one may not care to remember the solace obtained from "Other Lips," and yet—

Meet whom he listeth and roam where he will,
He smiles when he murmurs,
"Her bright smile haunts me still."

These are the times, these the emotions, which dispose us to think it is not all the idle conjuration of an over-heated imagination that makes us feel, as do those sweet songs of yore, that even our desert places are not without their OASES. And last, but not least, sweet to our senses as was the crystal flood of Horeb to lips athirst, comes betimes that other strain—born of mother's love—melodizing the never-to-be-forgotten Old Homestead, whereby

we quaff once again the cooling nectar
from—

“The old oaken bucket, the ironbound bucket,
The moss-covered bucket, that hung in the well.”

* * * *

Before mailing this memo. of *Garret Musings*, I would like to add that I think of you all very often, and one favour in particular I would ask of you, and that is, if you hear anything about our sister M—— at any time, you will be sure to let me know. Aside from our relationship, we were always warm friends, and, speaking for myself, I can vouch for an undiminished interest in her well-being. And “T——,” also. All I could think or say of the one applies equally to the other, and both, I always thought, possessed qualities which approximated nearest to what one might esteem as the BEAU-IDEAL of true womanly character. At the same time, circumstances were such as to make me feel I had more to thank the latter for, as for

a considerable time, when residing with her, she was all a mother could be to me, and oftentimes in my need I found the shelter of her broad wing, and the comforting influence of her sympathetic nature a most welcome refuge. I often think of her, and her model dwelling-place, and then it is that bright visions of the days lang syne rise up before me when she, as the charming hostess that she always was, attracted so many admiring friends to her hospitable board and glowing fireside. Ah! "Where is now that merry party, I remember long ago!"

Nor is that other absent one forgotten, he who shared with our dear sister the vicissitudes, the joys, the sorrows, and the triumphs of her home-life! and looking back now from the eventide of this to the brighter noon of that other day the retrospect reveals, to my eyes, no scenes more clearly defined, more entertaining and endearing to memory than

that which re-peoples the family circle and the old manor house of Chisholm-by-the-Lake. And the master ! ah, how my poor pen falters in its clumsy effort to convey some slight but not ill-fitting tribute to him who was the most prominent figure of all in a tableau where all were attractive, and interesting. He, with his courtly manners, his kindly observance, who presided there at those generous banquets like unto the laird of old-time-story, an ancestral chief as were those of the feudal period of Highland chivalry. At least, that was how I looked up to him in my younger days ; and the impression pictured on my boyish mind, and still retained in after years, was, and is, as a reproduction from the life of some doughty knight or cavalier of the iron-fisted days of Rob Roy or MacCallum-More. Years have passed since the period of which I speak, and many hard rubs since then have blurred somewhat the brighter, more juvenile colouring ; but the impress, the portraiture

as here transcribed remains on memory's tablet, presenting to my mind, even to this late day, the effigy of one who, even in the most homely and matter-of-fact way in which he could be regarded, was, at once, a good man, a good friend, a good fellow. Apart, too, from those more partial ones of his own ILK, as a landmark in the community and county in which he lived and wrought; as a holdfast to the beacon by the shore; as a welcome guide in a tangled pathway illumined by his light; and as a mainstay to many who leaned upon him, he will be missed and yet remembered. As a bulwark in the striving, turbulent progress of affairs, both private and public, the current of events as regards him may and do glide on smoothly, silently, and tell no loud resounding tale of a heroic mission accomplished there—aye, where once a noble swimmer with "heart of oak" manfully stemmed the adverse tide, succouring the helpless, drifting ones who might appeal for the support of his strong

arm and cheery voice. I think it may be safely assumed that with kinsmen the most elaborate eulogy, at the final goal, would seem an impertinence, did it seek in any way to enhance the value of those more estimable qualities appertaining to their dead. These speak for themselves in a language which, for eloquence and effect, far surpasses the highest encomium. Regarding the one here contemplated—as the fragments of the broken vase are said to retain the aroma of the flowers which they contained, so do the more lovable graces of this man still cling to his fair fame and name. And yet, notwithstanding all the comfort evolved from these ample and welcome assurances, they only partially mitigate, without dissipating, the anguish of that thought—at once so poignant and so confounding—that there is nothing left of that erstwhile substantial being, his companionable self, his engaging personality, but the faulty record of his good deeds, and the mute but touching souvenir of the vacant

chair! As if it were only yesterday, I saw my friend, buoyant of spirit, in the full enjoyment of perfect health, and surrounded by all the accessories of a prosperous career. To-day, he is gone!—vanished away as completely as the jewel on the crested wave!—and nought is left of him to those who remain but the memory of what he was in the hey-day of his existence. Again, if I may dwell a moment longer here on a theme which appeals most strongly to my feelings, I find it difficult—nay, impossible—to realise in this case (as in that other one that so recently and so severely struck home), the full import of that sweeping phrase, “GONE, GONE FOREVER!” And this is only one of innumerable instances of a like nature when bereavement gives such meaning and such pathos to those fateful, sorrowing words, “GONE, GONE FOREVER.”

As familiar as I have been with every form of human dissolution, I have never

been able to accustom myself to that most manifest sequence to decadence and death indicated by utter annihilation. And now the example to pass before my weak and confounded vision seems, in effect, replete with all the appalling surprises and novelty of the first. So it is that the subtle problem thus evolved, arising each time like the ghost of Banquo, seems to reproach one's very want of intelligence to solve its mystery, and then vanishes with the event only to re-appear on some later occasion. And now and finally, the mournful query, "Shall we ever see him again?" (as if for the first time) seems "knocking at my chamber-door," and finds an appropriate answer in the sad refrain of the poet's "Raven"—

"NEVER MORE ! NEVER MORE ! !"



A STUDY IN RAGS.

A Study in Rags.

It's not quite proper to call this sketch a "Study," as it is practically little else than a thoughtful reproduction of the more substantial tableau, with a few fanciful touches, as presented to my observation not long ago on the Liverpool Road. As we all journey together towards that inevitable strand, where strange to say we are all in such a desperate hurry to arrive, perhaps the most lamentable of the many appeals to our sympathy and commiseration is the one presented by the woman-tramp.

The one which is recalled here may claim no features beyond the common, that I am aware of; and save for the mere circumstance of my having settled myself near for the purpose of enjoying

a comfortable communion with that precious old briar-wood of mine, I should not have noticed her at all. As it was the old thing made considerably more than a passing impression on me, and I have no difficulty in producing a rough outline of her portrait. When I speak of her portrait, of course I do not mean anything so superficial as the filmy likeness which goes by that name. But rather such a probing, corroding negative of a human wreck as is far more searching than camera or pigment, and gouging its way deep into the inner fountain of pity, assails the channels of sympathy like a freshet! Aye, leaving them brimming with the pathos engendered by the spectacle of neglect, privation, and misery.

* * * *

What a wretched-looking old hag that is over there ! she with the grimy face, bleached locks, and tattered raiment, with head and shoulders yielding to the

tempting prop of a convenient bulge on the hedge. In a casual glimpse which I obtained of her a few moments since she was sitting up, and seemed to be searching for something. Ugly and repellent as she then appeared, however, the feeling of repulsion was greatly modified by the sight of a sad, wistful expression on her otherwise harsh, callous features. Lounging along, as I had been doing, with nothing particular in view, I hesitated, paused, and then, as I have said, sat down a little way off and lit my pipe. It was then I noticed she had taken something from her pocket, which absorbed so much of her attention that it is doubtful if she had seen me at all. It must have been a keepsake, or something of that kind, judging from the effect it seemed to have on a creature whom one would have thought had long since lost all sensitiveness. And though too far away to be quite certain, I was greatly surprised at what seemed to be those most unmistakable evidences of tears.

But even so, what a luxury these must have been, despite the briny, bitter flood they seemed to bring of dissolving, mellowing recollections ! Those precious tears—crystal drops of Nature's balsam that follow the cold iron and jagged gash dealt in conflict with an inexorable world !

Ah, the heart may seem a shrine of ice,
'Tis only Nature's kind device
To preserve from fell decay
What would perish and pass away.

So, in a blast where naught could shield,
'Twas a mercy it congealed,
And, though dissolving now and then,
It's only to thaw and freeze again.

Meanwhile, we find it a relief just then—we generally do—to enlarge the scope of our regards, and to take in a more pleasing, if not a more liberal, breadth of landscape. In this case, however, we find our vision, despite our reluctance, once more concentrated on that isolated being — that human

A STUDY IN RAGS.

magnet whose abject desolation draws us irresistibly nearer.

But, behold her now ! She's prone and tranquil. And see what a placid, almost happy, look ! Ah, what potent Pacific could have breathed its drowsy incense over that perturbed spirit ? What soothing spell, that with all the blessed obliviousness of sleep there should be mingled such a rejoicing sense of perfect wakefulness ? Nay, she seems not to know that she's cold, and the chill autumn air of friendlessness and poverty has veered round. Conscious of all but self, this spell, this seeming trance, may have lasted but a few brief moments ; but, in that time, what a grateful metamorphosis ! The keen November blast is to her, now, sweetly tempered to the soft aroma of June. And see how those bronzed and battered lineaments have relaxed ! That had been a smile on any other face, on hers it's more a look of pain,—a strange, anomalous expression as of an aching

heart struggling to laugh at the pleasures of others who repine! Alas, time and trouble have long since placed their dreaded seal on that shrivelled cheek, and now we see only the wintry aspect where once the roses bloomed! Ah, that look, that quasi-smile, may once have been a mirthful, ringing laugh; that form, elastic and comely, and she have coquetted in all the playful tyranny of conscious beauty! But what is she thinking of, now, we wonder? What vagary of "bitter-sweet" in that absent mind; what tender thoughts of loved and lost make that expression so pathetically divided 'twixt smiles and tears? What rummaged leaves were those she turned; what impress of sweet memories found she there, revealed in the light of long ago, but pictured on that broken tablet, and retained in life's gloaming—

As in the season's later fall

The brightest colours garnish all;

And *autumn* foliage, ere it dies,

Reveals the print of *summer* skies!

Ah, I have it now ; the magic of an invisible hand has beckoned her backward, and now she is with that little prattling one, seen once again through the long vista of her troubled wanderings ! And how she beams upon and fondles it, as of old, that fair, laughing, dimpled cherub ! Ah, how completely forgotten are all those tearful years since he was laid away in that cradle rocked by angels ! Nay, how beautiful is the mercy shed upon her now ; how grateful the respite of that sweet deception wherein her old eyes behold, in the full glory of her maternal pride, that tender blossom which, in the heyday of her girlish joy, she pressed to her fevered lips, and inhaled in the sweet, fresh fragrance of its baby breath, the first dawning consciousness of mother love !



TOUCHES OF NATURE.

Touches of Nature.

L—A Rural Playhouse.

NATURE, from a dramatic point of view, may be regarded as a world-wide Amphitheatre, wherein all living creatures disport themselves, each one taking a more or less delectable part, according to his fitness and the purpose of his being, and the Programme, as a whole, constitutes the great Play of the Universe.

The thunder-roll, the roar of the sea, the sigh of the zephyr, the crash of the tempest, are simply parts of a grand orchestral accompaniment, with which, taking in conjunction the more mechanical sounds produced by man's ingenuity, are blended the varied voices of all animate and inanimate creation.

The Dome of this incomparable edifice, is the azure sky ; the Pit, the richly carpeted Earth ; the Balconies, the vine-clad hills ; and the forest and the meadow—with their ever rejuvenating growth of arborial and florescent embellishment—lend their prolific and charming aids as accessories in the superb ensemble of scenic effect which adorn and beautify this mighty Playhouse.

While this true, even though florid, definition of our delightful World presents this aspect to the players generally, we must admit it is more especially the Poet's view of that vast stage, as seen from his unique perch and ideal elevation. But, notwithstanding it may appeal to some more strongly than to others, it does not require the more partial vision of a gifted and susceptible mind to see in the very commonplace (?) spectacle of Nature in her pastoral aspect what (to change the simile) may be regarded as a vast Kaleidoscope of universal dimensions.

And with all its parts corresponding to the benign purpose of their creation—focussed as it is to suit the weaker faculties of man's discernment—designed as it is, in its perfect entirety, all for his delectation and benefit; he is blind, indeed, and dull and senseless if he does not see and appreciate.

In the full possession, then—and may we add, also, in the full enjoyment—of a free pass to such a Playhouse as we have attempted to describe in the foregoing, it is not so very essential that we should be fashionably attired and luxuriously ensconced. Nay, the humblest and poorest may not only look on, but participate, as a privilege accorded to all, without exception, by the Divine Impresario.

Under these conditions, and with an audience thus assembled, those amongst us who are enabled by their peculiar—not to say richer—endowment of mind,

voice, or skill, to give the most effective expression to the sentiments and feelings of others, perform an agreeable and welcome office to their friends and fellows.

With these considerations, if it would not seem over presumptuous on the part of the least pretentious one of all, to offer himself to play his little part as occasion calls, the following effort, and those succeeding, may, it is hoped, find sufficient excuse to commend them to indulgence.

II.—A Welcome Rest.

Situation: A roadside lane in green Old England, between Leamington and Warwick. Time: a resplendent Summer's day. Condition: fatigued with a long walk, we come to some trees near a ravine, where we fling ourselves down by a grassy knoll, and begin the usual fetish with the old briar-wood. Ah!—

Black man, living without a God,
Worships His Spirit in a clod :
White man, walking in his light,
Makes an Idol of a pipe !

Then—reclining on a couch cushioned with herbage, starred all over with daisies, and festooned with honeysuckle ; beneath the leafy shade of a right “Royal Oak,” itself enlivened and adorned by a goodly throng of the sweetest song-birds of the feather-world ; apart from the busy bustle of traffic, and undisturbed, unaffected, by the turmoil, the heart-burn of business ; just here, just as we are, even though not as we ought to be, we yield to the spell ! Yes, we abandon, without reserve, our erstwhile chafed and harassed spirit to the all-prevailing unison, the responsiveness, the fascination of this incomparable Eden ! And just here, with no discordant note to jar on the sweetly perfumed breeze, we pause and listen to the all-resounding organ of animate and inanimate things, toned down and tempered to

melodize with the perfect harmony of all Nature's sublime accordion!

Abiding thus, in dreamy ecstasy, exhaling in the silent fusion of that magic "weed" an incense not ill-befitting the God of Nicotine, we feel, and justly so, that there is no sweeter or more grateful strain than that which may be attuned to what is so adorable about good Dame Nature. And the emotion inspired gets much of its inspiration in our consciousness of her near relationship, her kinship to us, and our own responsive felicity. Then it is—

Environed by those spiral wreaths

We watch them mount upon the breeze,
To that Kingdom whose omniscient rule
Makes this its floral vestibule !

Nay, at such a time and such a place, even fasting finds abundant material for a feast, and leavening the baser promptings of the flesh—aye, hunger itself—

with a better, a diviner, relish, the spirit rejoices though the body pines. In this respect, however, the sated "lotus-eater" of fashion, and the creature of all abundance, are the least susceptible to Nature's pleasing endearments. And the outcast, beleaguered of famine, and oppressed with all the ills incident to his destitute, homeless condition, even he seems nearer to the touch of that soothing hand which, in sympathy, at least, is ever outstretched for his succour and relief.

III.—An Island Gem.

I venture to affirm, without fear of contradiction, and with all due respect for rival claims, that were one required to designate a locality where nature, art, and cultivation have wrought the most harmoniously and effectually, and produced the most perfect and charming results, he may travel the world over (as the writer has done) and find no place to compare with our mother-land of Old England. And more especially is this



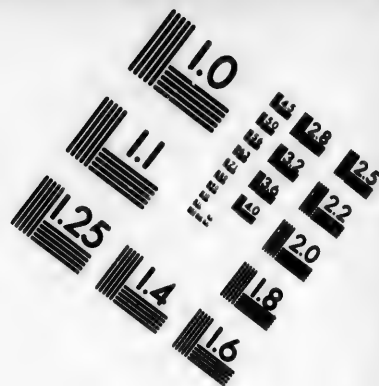
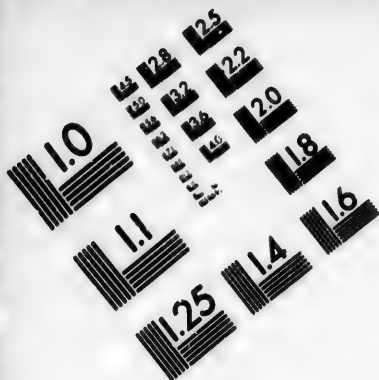
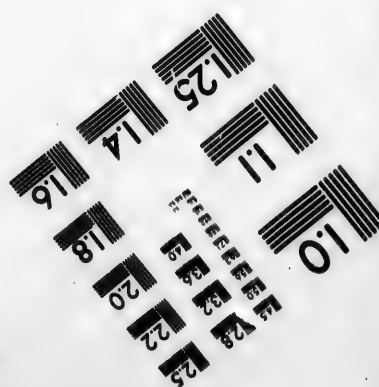
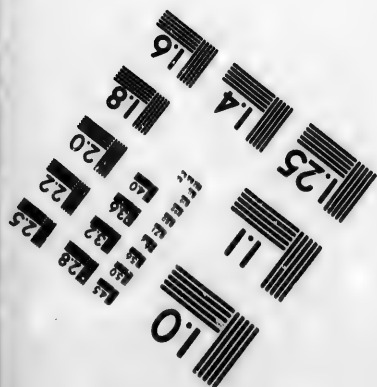
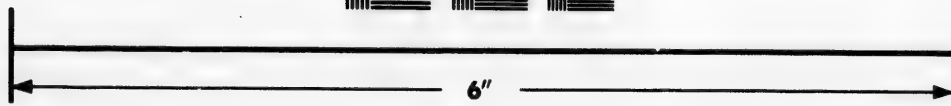
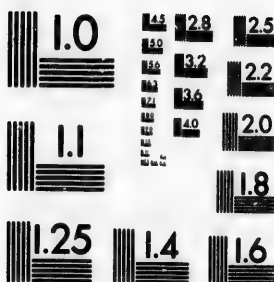


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preference confirmed and justified in the superlative quality of her scenery, as evidenced by the transcendent loveliness of her English landscape.

I may say, furthermore, to still further emphasize my own individual preference, that, so far as exterior embellishment and all carnal graces enter into our mere human conception of what that other, more heavenly, vale may be, probably the nearest approximation we have to it—at least, so far as landscape and this earth's fairest embodiment are concerned—is to be found in that beautiful region of country between Ryde and Ventnor, in the Isle of Wight. Nay, were we living in those days when the supremest efforts of Art essayed to depict premature glimpses of that other blessed goal, some worthy successor of genius like theirs would find here no greater stint than to reproduce on canvas that island gem, with its ethereal environment of sky-blue sea.



All blooming in Dame Nature's bower
Behold the tree, the shrub, the flower !
And blending in their mute appeal
All most lovely in ideal—
Whence the bee his honey sips,
And glancing from those ruby lips,
The sweetest fragrance of that Eden fair
Is wafted on the morning air !

IV.—A Casual Acquaintance.

It was my Fate (although I could not call it my good fortune at the time) to spend one summer of my life in that favoured region above referred to, and it was then I had my rencounter with the then living subject of the home-spun verses which follow this introduction. In the course of a somewhat varied career, it has been my lot to meet, and to some extent to foregather, with a good many oddish characters ; and this peculiarity—I might say sympathy in what might be termed an eccentric destiny—followed me up and stuck to me in my island perambulations.

Of course, I mean by oddish characters those of the meaner, more destitute class ; and to see those miserable, famine-stricken creatures hobbling about side by side with the over-fed, richly-garbed custodians of plethoric abundance is a spectacle sufficient of itself to incline Dame Fortune's most favoured one to take his gun and dog and cleave to solitude and the wilderness. Such at least is the effect it has on me, and this to some extent may account for the fact that I prefer by-ways to high-ways, and seclusion to a congregation. When I speak of having foregathered more or less with the miserable set who have managed somehow to blanket so many of my more convivial impulses, it has rather been for a purpose than through bent of inclination. At the same time it is none the less a satisfaction to me to acknowledge that my quasi-association with some of these has not been wholly unproductive of what might be called a pleasurable sequence. Wayside loafers and despicable personifications of man's

degradation all too many of them not only seem to be but really are, yet if approached in a certain way, the more repellent scales vanish, and one is surprised to see how readily and naturally they humanize. Aye, and regarding the superlative dignity of man's estate as paramount to the minor degrees of class distinction, we may even go so far as to say—

In that communion of heart, and tongue, and lip
A feeling akin to fellowship
Finds much in what's so out of plumb
To restore the social equilibrium.

The truth of this was made most especially observable with the one I have called the Rover-Tramp. At the same time, he was only one of many other examples, and the prominence given him here must not be taken as indicating that such cases are rare.

The Rover-Tramp, as I knew him, was a very dark and shrivelled-up old

sailor-man. In point of years he must have scored eighty, at the very least ; though the more experienced of his craft often look very much older than they really are. Carnally speaking he was the antique effigy of skin and bone ; and in this respect he reminded me of illustrations I have seen in the shrivelled anatomy of some old thorough-bred race-horse. What he may have been like in his youth it would have been difficult to conjecture ; but judging from what was left of him, I should say that in his prime Nature might well have been proud of this castaway model of man's physical endowment. There was one peculiarity, too, about the old fellow's physiognomy which also recalled a very striking phenomenal characteristic exhibited by the aged winners of "Oaks" and "Derbies." I refer to the organs of vision, which in the case of this incomprehensible being was of that rare depth and brilliancy which bespeaks the more gamey and indomitable spirit in both man and beast.

In this instance, however, the uncanny impression produced on me by those owlsh, yet luminous radiators of the soul suggested the fancy that—

Time, whose tell-tale mission never lies,
While ravaging all, had spared the eyes,
And, as if to light his gruesome task,
Had left them burning to the last.

According to his story, which—like the fragments of a torn missive cast to the winds—only came to me in shreds, he had been born to deprivation. Aye, and—

Except in the vision of more kindly dreams,
There was no mother's love to teach him
what Home means.

He had followed the sea all his life ; and his earliest recollection of a dwelling-place was the "fo'cas'le" of a fishing smack. Then he remembered having taken to "coasting" ; afterwards to longer voyages ; until, finally, he took to

"whaling." Once, when in a more confidential mood, he admitted having lent a hand aboard "a slaver"; but whether or not he had done anything in a piratical way did not transpire. That he had evidently both seen and shared in some—perhaps many—more or less sanguinary "scrimmages" was unmistakably manifested by the maimed and slashed appearance of his right hand and arm; while a deep broad scar running from the temple down across the left cheek, only too plainly indicated the part it had been his lot to play in what had been, in all likelihood, a life struggle. He lived, at least a considerable share of his time, in a retired nook, some distance back from the shore, where tree, and shrub, and lilac graced the otherwise unprepossessing appearance of what almost seemed a joke to call a home. This unique habitation had been contrived—as only a sailor would have thought of doing—from what was, or had been, the castaway hulk of an old "Deal lugger."

This the old fellow would seem to have reclaimed, and, having sawed it in two, had set the larger part on end, stern uppermost. In this he dwelt ; but how he managed to subsist was a not altogether pleasing matter of surmise.

He was too much of a wreck himself to do much, if anything ; and beyond the fashioning and rigging of miniature boats, and such like, it were no unkindly imputation to presume that he enlarged the sphere of local compassion by occasional excursions into the country.

When my own unpropitious, not to say ill-favoured, fortunes called me hence, I went over to the old fellow's bidding-place, and bid him what turned out to be a last farewell. When, on returning to the island a year or two afterwards, I went to look him up, I found both the cabin and its occupant had disappeared. He had vanished, and left no trace of his whereabouts or existence, and it was only

after long and persistent inquiry that I ascertained the, to me, sorrowful intelligence that, like poor Tom Bowling, "he had gone aloft." It seems the hut in which he lived had been overturned in a storm, and the poor old fellow, after gathering together a few personal effects, turned his back on that turbulent element on whose heaving bosom he had been fostered and nurtured. He had then shaped his course landwise, where the last seen of him alive was as he disappeared in that fringe of beautiful forest which borders the interior. It was in a pretty little grove not far away from Sea View that his remains were afterwards discovered.

I may mention here, by way of finality, that the last time I saw him he was feeling uncommonly low-spirited, and was disposed to dwell much more than was his wont on the religious aspect of things, and what he called "his future estate." But somehow, although the Divine in-

fluence, in some inexplicable way, had penetrated the outer crust of his case-hardened soul, nevertheless, as it seemed to me the fair face of Piety as beaming through those seared and grimy lineaments seemed to wear a ferocious aspect, and looked almost wicked. Not that it was wicked, of course; but rather as if in his case, as with many another of those more hardened and savage examples, while the potency of its all-prevailing force had effected its benign purpose, the resistance offered had been so long and persistent that, even when the heart had been touched as with some magic wand, the countenance was for a time unable to relax its more forbidding aspect.

P.S.—In the treating of this item on a threadbare theme, I have appended a few verses, and whether these be good, bad, or indifferent, I may as well frankly admit that I make no pretensions to and have no claims on the art of poetising. And now, as I look them over, I can

hardly account for such a jingling blend of terminals, as they seem to me, and as they will in all likelihood appear to any other person who may be so kind as to look them over.

And regarding this point, I may say further, now that it occurs to me, that they were written under conditions of both mental and physical hardship, which give the more sombre and pathetic cast to the situation described. I may also mention—though I do not vouch for its integrity—that in the composing of these random verses my erratic pencil was for some time missing, and for a substitute I took up with an old quill pen. Then what should be the wonder, forsooth, if this feathery member of a once glancing pinion—true to its lofty mission—had sought, in its own peculiar way, to beguile the hand that held it captive?

* * * *

THE ROVER-TRAMP.

PART FIRST.

(Lost.)

Parted for ever from kindred and home,
Aged and broken but fated to roam—
As like the case of a once comely bark,
Wrecked for having missed its mark—
A mariner, cast upon a floral strand,
In far-off England's flower-land.

'Tis a saddening sight, this to behold,
The shrinking Rover, once so bold,
And fain would we cast about to find
In man and Nature both combined,
Retrieving traits in one so low,
A fostering spirit in the snow,
To reclaim when Life's no more
The meanest wreck that's gone ashore.

Nay, but see our rural Dame,
Despite his character and fame,
How beneficently, in her way,
Does she greet this castaway !
Kindlier than Gospel's stern remand
Does she take him by the hand,
To put him on that hidden trail
Where the wanderer finds the Grail.

She kindly reproves him with a smile,
For playing truant all this while;
And in her own sweet way she intimates
That he's been dallying with the Fates,
Who, never pleased with what they see,
Would rival Truth with Fallacy.

* * * *

As on his heather-bed he lies
With so much to feast his eyes,
Is it the phantom of a dream
That stirs this creature all so lean?
Ah! despite the fact that hunger craves,
There's much to soothe in Nature's ways,
And with it all a "feast of Soul"
That needs no aid from beef or bowl.
Nor is his feast without its "Lamb,"
There, it's gambolling with its dam!
Not that dam of man's device
Which makes Love claim a sacrifice,
But shorn of a curse of fell design
Reveals a Love that is divine!

* * * *

A murmuring breeze, all through the trees,
Come softened with sweet melodies;
And the cawing rook and the purling brook
Recall his gaze from his wayward ways.

The robin and thrush, off there in the brush,
Pipe the old song that's been silent so long;
And even the frogs, in that deep dark chine,
Join in the chorus of Old Lang Syne.

Ah! with Nature's fingers on the keys,
There's song and music in the breeze;
And the tempest hushed in that sheltered vale,
He listens to the song of the nightingale.

Nor is the shriller voice of the noisy jay
So much lacking in its way,
And the flapping wings of the clumsy daws
Seem like the clapping of applause;
Aye, and though Nature thrills so soft and low,
There's naught amiss in the owl's ho-ho!

And those other birds of the gamey sort,
What keen reminders of his early sport!
Those pigeons on that far-off tree,
His failing sight may dimly see;
Yet he'd seen the time it were a trifle
To bring one down with his trusty rifle.

Aye, and that crafty fox meandering there,
A risky shot for a "crack" to dare,
But oft in his prime the day had been
That prowling trophy had lost his skin!

•

Nay, but all the animals of the chase
Are become as friends in his disgrace,
And now he's aged, his gun is sold,
And for deeds of daring his story's told.

* * * *

Long hours have past since he broke his fast,
But he recks nought of famine in this welcome repast,
And though outcast and homeless he finds this abode
A respite from care and the world's pitiless goad.

The toad and the reptile, like him, all revile,
Yet in kinship with these would he rest for a while,
And though the haunts of the brute 'tis a respite from sin,
And softens the pang of what Life might have been.

Many of the sounds he hears
Come as memories "steeped in tears";
And, while the spring from whence they flow
Is bleak and crusted as with snow,
Still do they sparkle in the sun
As down his pallid cheek they run,
And tender thoughts of loved and lost
Melt as dewdrops in the frost.

The lowing herd, the cattle-cry,
Bring his boyhood nearer by;
The hens, the geese, the chanticleer,
Bring that other farmyard near.

A gentle voice, one soft and dear,
 So long hushed, seems murmuring here,
 And all as the echoes of a vesper bell
 They vibrate through that cloistered dell.

* * * *

THE ROVER-TRAMP.

PART SECOND.

(Found.)

On this old tramp
 There was the stamp
 Of a chastening rod
 That taught him God ;
 And in the lengthening shadow
 He cleaves to the sparrow,
 For in its fall
 He's promised all.

* * * *

The old fellow gets up after a while,
 pulls himself together a bit, and as he
 has some distance to walk before
 nightfall he overhauls his greasy canvas

..

bag, where he finds but a tiny crust of bread which he gives to the birds. Presently, however, feeling faint and thirsty, and well-nigh famished, he proceeds in quest of the only stimulant obtainable; that is to say, water—and then—

Down in the hollow where the bluebells grow,
The old man totters, weak and slow;
And where the vine and the primrose lace,
Nature hides a dimple in her face.

A cooling spring and water-fall
Where all is pure without gall,
And amongst her tresses, all so fair,
A liquid gem is sparkling there.

In the living spring which greets his eyes
Its limpid depths reflect the skies,
Where purple mists all flecked with gold
Depict an azure fateful fold.

He looks askance to see who's near,
In case a keeper should appear;
Then, over the gleaming crystal bowed.
He seems as floating on a cloud.

Ah ! a grateful omen in its way,
As if Heaven was not so far away
And to see it *under*, and not *above*,
Betokens the OLIVE BRANCH and DOVE.

He drops his bundle, his little mite,
To cleave to this token of a soul's delight,
And as he quaffs the nectar cool,
He sees a vision in the pool.

'Tis in Nature's glass his likeness cast,
Absolved of all that's in the past ;
Not as he is, but as he'll be
In the long ETERNITY !



THE ATROCITIES OF GENIUS.

The Atrocities of Genius.

If one were required to give as nearly as he were able, and all in one sentence, an answer to this question: what is the best and strongest evidence of PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT and LIBERAL PROGRESS in the Nineteenth Century?

It occurs to me he could not do better than to reply as follows:—It is the frank recognition of and the generous reward accorded to that erstwhile dangerous and onerous endowment of the mind which we term GENIUS.

But while this response would seem to ill accord with the title of this paper, it must be borne in mind that this

evidence of a just but tardy appreciation only obtains a few generations back, and is, comparatively speaking, of a very recent date.

In this relation and as regards reward we may observe that, in the first place, these people, whose bright scintillations of intellect have immortalised them and astonished the world, did not work for reward, at least not in the viler sense of remuneration. And in the next place, and what may in some measure account for the miserable treatment they received, many good things often require a prodigious long time to fructify, and even when mature may make their advent, if not prior to public need, at any rate prior to public acceptance. Not, as in the case of Reform, we will say, that it overshoots the mark, but rather that it takes a generation or two for plodding Conservatism to arrive at the "bull's-eye." In the meantime what should be the wonder that a stationary Government,

and a people groping in mental obscurity, should object to these momentous concessions, the fruits and the prospective benefits of which are so far beyond the horizon of their limited vision.

This consideration, however, only partially mitigates, without in any manner justifying the misconception and persecution to which these pioneers of reform and investigation were subjected, and which is made available of here as the gist of this article. In this relation, and judging from what we think we know of those unhappy possessors of some one all predominant faculty, it would seem, for that reason alone, to have had entailed upon them a correspondingly large measure of adversity and affliction. The sphinx-like isolation in which their lot was cast denying them, in many cases, all social and creature enjoyment, and almost invariably walling them off, as it were, from man's habitual intercourse with his fellow man.

In each and all the observations we take of people and things there are wholesome deductions to be drawn and utilised if we care to do so. As an example of this, it may be noticed here that so far as personal emolument and worldly advancement may be taken as conclusive factors and evidences of prosperity and success, these more remarkable exponents of Genius were, in one sense, despicable failures. Of course we know better now, because time has been given for their plant to fructify. With many—nay, with us all—the brief span of life is too limited to enable one's fellows to pass judgment, and to award either extravagant laudation or to mete out and justify unreserved condemnation. At the same time it admonishes us not to be in too great haste to arrive at a verdict,—not to be so impulsive and arrogant in our judgment of what another may have thought or done, and what he is thinking of, and likely to do, stamping the black seal of adverse opinion, and

even worse, on one's doings, and flinging the man himself into the scale of an all too often biased feeling, and thus weighing him as though he were an ordinary mean commodity.

And here let us observe, that in our estimate of good and bad as applied to our fellow man we are too prone to apply a wrong estimate. And thus, with all the ecstatic exultation of the delighted child, or the savage rooting of the censorial hog, our virtues and our demerits are submitted to a public verdict and passed upon either as the rocket that illumines the sky, or as the plumb-line that sounds the profoundest depths of muck and mire. Nay, our standard, both of praise and blame is a shifting delusion and a fraud:—the highest for censure and the lowest for applause. 'Tis at best a faulty conception of inhuman perfection as it is of brute degradation—the exercise of which in its spasms of pious exorcism while it impugns the design of our creation is a

vile aspersion on the "noblest work of God."

This was what was done, however, in the case of those brighter lives whose great achievements, and at the same time whose great hardships invite at once our highest esteem and our profoundest commiseration.

Nay, if *failure* and *degradation*, as it seemed to those other eyes, had been left passively at that, it had been, at least, somewhat of a comfort and a blessing to the flesh ; but it did not stop there. It did not stop, in very many cases, and rest satisfied with the pain inflicted, the ignominy imposed by a false and shameful verdict. A more appalling, a more exemplary expedient was resorted to to keep down, to affright, to terrorise the too inquisitive tendencies of the human mind. And the revolting placards they bore in the distorted view of the jeering masses then was still more emphatically

in accord with the shameful tableau thus presented, and so considered of man's errors and depravity. A tableau, we may observe still further, only equalled in its enormity, though not with its baleful effects, by those presented to our languid inspection in the *chef-d'œuvres* of the "Old Masters" of Art; representing in one instance what appeared to them as the probable and impending spectacle of "The Last Judgment." It may seem a digression, but it appears to me worth noticing here, the very great influence which that dreaded condition, imposed by penury and want, has had in assimilating classes and reconciling the highest and the lowest orders; compelling the former especially to concede its need of and dependency on the latter. Of course, it is putting a case patent to all, and presents nothing in the way of dispute or argument. Nevertheless, it seems to me a very remarkable thing that the most prolific germ of genius should spring from the meanest and, seemingly, the most worthless soil; and, further-

more, that the conditions imposed by the greatest destitution are those by which it is afterwards fostered and attains to the highest possible fruition. The point here is that adversity, in some form or other, must needs be the condition precedent and essential to the strongest and most fervent efforts of the intellect to bring forth its best and most exalted achievement. As in music there are no refrains so sweet as those which are attuned to pain, so in imagery we find that our brightest conceptions of life were the gleanings of its darkest hours. This, destitution and enforced self-denial are likely to provide. Nevertheless, it seems to me, as it probably does to others, a very remarkable fact that, looking over the traces which the more redeeming of the very lowest class have left of their existence, Genius and Poverty have been found, as a general rule, plodding along together.

In the conditions thus imposed it would indeed seem ordained by Providence that

Necessity should be the parent of Production. But while this may in a measure account for the very humble birth of Genius and its shabby antecedents, it does not follow that that transcendent quality of mind may not have its inception in higher places than the squalid dwellings of the poor. Nay; it is not so much a question of *germ* as it is of *development* to have wrought such a contrast between the product of the lowest and that of the highest classes. Regarding, then, not so much the *origin* as the *sequence* of Genius as manifested in those opposite spheres—the high and the low—and their respective rivalry in the sphere of brain-work, we may observe further:—To have seen Genius succeeding though handicapped in every way, suggests the query, “What have Wealth and Culture done?” Aye, with all conditions most favourable. Now this is where that very remarkable feature I have before mentioned obtrudes itself. It is indeed remarkable, not to say fateful, that the measure of success should have

been in ratio to the resistance. I say *fateful* otherwise we are cast back on the query just propounded—*i.e.* what have those others done whose condition in life may very justly be presumed to have been (and is) such as to have vastly lessened that resistance? This point is all the more nagging when we take into thoughtful consideration not so much the *opposition* to the more lofty examples of achievement on the part of those humbler ones, but rather the *competition* engendered therein. In other words—the provocation, the incentive, the easy rivalry proffered by that ill-favoured pair—Genius and Poverty—those most humble and destitute of all competitors, with their stunted acquirements and miserable disadvantages. There, too, was the incentive of envy—not to apply that better word emulation—to inspire, or as we might naturally have expected would have been provoked in the breasts of the all-predominant upper classes. — That uppermost strata of society whose people take upon themselves the highest offices

and, like wise generals, never fail to seize upon and to occupy the more salient points and all the social elevations.

And yet, notwithstanding all their prodigious leverage, and considering all the advantages which we might very naturally expect would have accrued to wealth, leisure, and culture, what have they accomplished?—Why, despite all the potent auxiliaries at their beck and call, nevertheless sloth, indolence, feasting, and the orgies of a wine-damned sociability have produced (comparatively speaking) but little more on their part than the bastard progeny of greed and the all-too-alluring concomitants of mere bodily gratification! And these and kindred propensities conspiring to enthrall the mind, as did the same baleful influence in the decline of Roman dominion, all intellectual effort became then, as it does now, suppressed — and its more exalting promptings squelched, as effec-

tually as were they in the darkest days of tyranny and oppression.

Yes, I repeat, and I think it is a fact which none will attempt to deny, that the most brilliant manifestations of Genius have proceeded from those of our fellows who belonged to what we may term the Rag Kingdom. These, on account of the unpropitious fact of their usual abiding places being of an unsavoury and even repellent character, are generally regarded as the rubbish of human kind; but amongst these the records of the past have revealed the greatest number of really great minds of which our race can boast.

Nay, for those whose unenvied lot is cast in that despicable but not unproductive sphere of poverty, we may quote these sweeter words of that most genial singer, BURNS—

“Ikle blade of grass has ain drap of dew!”

And what that drop was as regards Genius in those other days we will now proceed to consider.

While those brighter stars which illuminate the little world of invention would seem to exhibit the more exasperating features of unrequited achievement—being denied, as they so frequently were, not only the fruits, but the credit, of their prolific labours—those other flashes of Genius akin to these, their compeers in the no less productive field of letters and exploration, invite our attention and appeal none the less strongly to our admiration and sympathy.

Before this age of sensational trash literature, wherein a passably fair string of "jokes" may tickle the fancy, and, in a manner of speaking, "win a name," even the most worthy and brilliant exponents of thought and of genius suffered a fearful martyrdom in their effort to relieve their isolation and to obtain some slight patronage, much less fame.

Many of these, too, although we may hope they did not toil in vain, were utterly unable to break through the trammels, the innumerable obstacles, which beset their path and hampered and frowned upon their work. Nor, in this relation, would it be all an idle fancy to presume that some, if not, indeed, a great many, of the finest manuscripts that were ever written never found the light, or, if they did, they fell into the hands of prowling loremongers who, we may readily imagine, bartered them for small sums to gleaners with fervid longings but weak endowment. These people in their turn, then, with just knowledge enough to be able to recognise their probable value, and ingenuity sufficient to make the appropriation pass current, adopt them as their own. And thus—

As trespassers in another's domain,
They stole the fruit and filched the fame;
And blundering at a grave where none can tell,
We crown the fraud with Immortelle!

With regard to the grievous hardships and difficulties under which these men laboured, and often failed, as we have already intimated here, it is not so much a matter of surprise when we take into account the nature of the soil in which they had to plant, and also the way they were hampered in their work. The sterility of the public mind and its manifold restraints ; the frightful besom with which their little nursery was swept from time to time ; all in those lapsing ages of superstition and stoicism, when the iron mould of a cruel and obdurate conservatism shaped all things after a fossil pattern ; when all and every change, and even the bare suggestion of reform or improvement were frowned upon and pounced upon as rank treason or heresy, we need not be surprised and may to some extent appreciate what these pioneers in their more luminous realm of conception and thought had to contend against. Efforts were made, despite the opposition, as we know ; but then they

were denounced as overt acts prejudicial to the public weal. Aye, denounced and punished as crimes, forsooth, but, as we know them now to have been, they were only such mental and moral deflection from the then prevailing iniquity as to make all posterity applaud with admiration and gratitude. In those days, outside of the nobility and priesthood, the great majority of the people were regarded as probationers and even culprits, and all as "miserable sinners." At the same time whatever might be done to ameliorate their condition, was regarded as a vile instinct of the flesh and the craving of an unholy appetite—aye, a concession to the promptings of the devil and a premature and ungodlike anticipation of a "Future Reward!"

Were it not for the more tragic features which in those days went so far and so ruthlessly to malign mankind, and to distort and disfigure the benign countenance of God's image, and His sublime purpose,

it would all seem to us now a ridiculous burlesque. Even as it is, one occasionally requires to check an unbecoming tendency on the part of the risible faculties. Fortunately for me, in this case I am not given to laughter, and the longer I live the less I see to laugh at. I do, I will admit, sometimes break out in a mirthful way, but it is most often when I find restraint too much of a strain, and yet, as I have said, this condition of affairs in these olden times is one that would set me off if I gave the slightest additional encouragement to that propensity.

An excuse for some of these more exemplary citizens who helped to stigmatize and to taunt Genius might possibly be obtained in a limited degree by a temporary transposition in imagination from our own to their time. But, however earnest we may be in our endeavour to feel as they did, if only for the nonce, we find it impossible not to take a ludicrous rather than a serious view. For instance,

had you lived some hundreds of years ago
in a place called Pisa, and after the toils
of a long arduous day's work, perchance

Racking your aching bones
In the hewing of cathedral stones,
For little other carnal reward
Than the approbation of the Lord,

I say, assuming this to have been the case, and, in a critical moment in the wooing of the slumberous Goddess who angelizes sleep, you had had your night's rest ravished by an apparently rampant maniac outside, shouting, "I have found it! Eureka! Eureka!" I repeat, had this been your lot and provocation, what would you have thought of the delirious and ecstatic Galileo? Why, had you been of a mild, forgiving disposition (as I know you are), you would have lost no time next morning in recommending him for a cheap ticket at the Office for the Assisting of Pauper Emigration to America.—(A benevolent scheme which,

by the way, until recently, received such liberal encouragement from that most wise Congress of the United States.) Or, if of a quick, impulsive temperament, you would have most likely have consigned him with still greater alacrity to—well—say, to the ultimate goal of a very consumptive cough.

Seriously speaking, however, these people (and also those of a much later period) on many occasions of extraordinary discovery, were imbued with alarm and terror. The sensation produced partaking very largely of the conviction that not only their present tranquillity but their eternal rest was imperilled, and that a higher divinity than that of a transient dream was affronted and enraged.

Besides this feeling, this stupid and faithless suspicion of an all-benign Providence, there were other causes which contributed most severely and

ungenerously to make these ebullitions of Genius a plague to the body whence they emanated.

It would seem as if some untoward influence had something, nay much, to do in the constitution of these marvellous men's characters; the product in this respect being (in the most indulgent view) not much above the poorest. That this is a delicate point to touch upon, we must all admit. But for some of us at least the age of what we may term Saint-ship, is passed. And regarding the institution of Saint-ship we may observe that there was a great deal that was very admirable, and we may also add, very presuming in its conception. At the same time the allotment of the perfect union of all the virtues in the creatures it elevated may be open to question and we must beg to differ with its adherents in the view which we take here. Insomuch that it would seem to us to serve no other purpose than to exalt a mirror

of perfect (perhaps) but purely *ideal* morality ; and this, too, for the manifest object of reproving the *real*. Thus when you looked in it, it made your face look black instead of giving it its natural and more redeeming colour ; and to make it fit the real it must needs debase the ideal.

And here let us observe :—that however desirous eulogy may be to close its eyes to certain features to render the possessor of them the more admirable, exemplary, and imposing, it seems to us he gains nothing beyond effect. Indeed, he may well pause from time to time to take a look into the sweeter countenance of Truth. This beautiful attribute, in the abstract, is as near perfection as it is possible for us to comprehend. But (if we may be allowed to personify her) in her relations to people in general even she is no saint, nor would she gain anything by apotheosis.

Nay nor do the spirits of defunct mortality require the additional and absurd adjuncts of aureole and wings to improve their appearance or to suggest a sphere of usefulness so far removed from our own.

Regarding once more the lives of those we have been considering, I have said, "It would seem as if an untoward influence had had something to do in the formation of those men's character," and yet it was only as—

A fate that might have seemed malign,
Save for a purpose all benign,
To keep those greater gifts of mind
In touch and sympathy with mankind.

And this view may, to an appreciable extent, explain another feature as regards qualities aside from the all-predominant one which distinguished these men. In a majority of instances of extraordinary—one might almost say, supernatural—

mental endowment as regards certain faculties, Nature's exceeding liberality in one particular would seem proportionally stinted as regards most of the others, and this to such an extent as to make these more attractable examples of intelligence, if viewed on the average principle, hardly up to the ordinary standard of common sense. And thus, with that all potent exception by which they are distinguished and set apart, they are oftentimes the most infantile and helpless specimens of the human race.

Owing, as we may assume, partially to this, and, no doubt, largely to their pre-occupation, their neglect or inability to apply themselves in the ordinary humdrum affairs incident to the earning of a livelihood, made them all along, not only indifferent to the every-day, hackneyed call of minor duties, but to appear, if not actually to feel, unmindful and culpably careless, not only of their own but their family's welfare. Thus (as their neigh-

bours looked on them) deservedly wanting so many things which they made no effort to obtain, they came to be regarded as something worse in the social scale than despicable examples of idleness and improvidence. Although it is too late now to materially aid them in this respect, suggestions in their behalf may serve some good purpose in setting them right in what might seem wrong. And it no doubt did appear very wrong to their friends and dependents at the time.

In the absorption of mind engendered while the faculty which distinguished these men was evolving, Phoenix-like, its splendid product ; in the fascination of the early inception of what was coming and about to transpire ; in the shimmering sheen which they severally and alone detected of a light beyond where all, for centuries, had been darkness ; in the fickle glint of the capricious Will-o'-the-wisp which betokened even to their wonder and

astonishment another hitherto undiscovered realm,—all this made the nagging, grovelling details of mere wage-work and husbandry a minor if not indeed a contemptible consideration.

But while this explanation may in a measure excuse, it does not, as we have remarked, lessen by one jot or tittle the burden of blame and ignominy they had to bear. And while being put to the vilest, bitterest straits, as they often were, to obtain harbourage and subsistence, to the highest strain on their mental resources were superadded the rankling pang of misconception, and the no less baleful ingredients of hunger and bodily wretchedness. Not infrequently, too, in the case of these intellectual Messiahs, exposed as they were in the meanness of their appearance and in the earnestness of their convictions to public scorn and irresponsible denunciation, they were hounded from cellar to garret, from street to common, aye, and to the stake! All this, of course, during

the long maddening probation which preceded the fruition of what they were secretly sowing and planting.

In some cases this work, this growth, we may observe, while being ordained to culminate or fructify at some future period, may have had its inception at an earlier period, and in perchance humbler sources of endeavour and failure—of grief and disappointment.

In the case of Invention, the stint of completing and perfecting may have been, comparatively speaking, a very insignificant performance, and yet it sometimes carried with it both the glory and the harvest. And this is the most trying and exasperating feature in the whole range of individual effort; but more especially so in the case of ingenious contrivance. The same thing applies, however, in the case of some so-considered unsuccessful Generals. He who may have accomplished all but

success, and in the crucial moment, in the "eleventh hour," falls or is superseded. His successor in the final triumph doing little else besides breathing the smoke of victory as he listens to the fateful stroke of Twelve.

With regard to the attitude of their contemporaries, had the rancour and malevolence of these people ceased with their vituperation and proscription, there had been some item of comfort and even security for their victims. But no ; they felt it to be their duty to crucify liberty of thought, and the immolation of the source whence it emanated was the means adopted to intimidate and stifle all individual speculation.

And thus it came about that this or that recalcitrant spirit in their midst,—this or that shabby oddity—seeking and howling and scheming to undermine, as it was thought, the sacred edifice hallowed by centuries of what they deemed pious

adherence ; this or that indolent, shiftless, degenerate dreamer, whose miserable condition was of itself a bad smelling negative to the purity and wholesomeness of his professions, nay, whose very appearance was a satire on the expediency and utility of his new ideas was doomed to the frightful ordeal then in vogue to deodorise and purify.

In close companionship with these less prepossessing personifiers of those high qualities of mind and mission which have distinguished and exalted them above the common level of mankind, there are others more attractive but none the less unfortunate. Regarding some of these, though their lives may have been lightened, from time to time, with occasional beams of welcome sunshine, the more refulgent orb which beamed so gloriously on their after-life—though it virtually reached its zenith in their time—was obscured to them, and they groped their way all weary and in darkness to their long rest.

In the spectacle presented to our observation in a thoughtful review of those days and those men,—grouped about in that incomparable Galaxy of grand old portraits, we behold those noble and imposing forms of Wickliffe, Latimer, and Bunyan,—Hargreaves, Cartwright, and Newcomen,—Spenser and Raleigh, Hudson, Jaques, Cartier and Columbus, together with a mighty host of others who are lost to sight in the dim vista which veils them from our eager gaze.

Some of these, though men of genius, do not strictly belong to the set we have kept in view most of the time since we took this subject in hand. To go over the list in detail of the heroes and martyrs of Reform and Invention, of Letters and Exploration, would be beyond the limited scope of this article. Some were Geniuses in one quality of the mind only; others in more than one.

Raleigh's genius was on the more liberal scale, and in his rich embodiment of rare qualities his life and career present, at once, perhaps, the most brilliant and engaging personality, and the most thrilling and pitiful story in the whole range of biographical lore; though all the others mentioned here suffered more or less in the manner we have sought to describe.

Of the most distinguished, the fate of Spenser was an abomination to our race, and his story, even at this late day, like that of Raleigh, presents a shameful, lurid picture of "Man's inhumanity to man." After creating and bequeathing to posterity what is esteemed by some eminent critics as the finest production of imaginative genius in the English or any other language, he was literally left to starve. And notwithstanding all which we might imagine would have accrued in compensation for his noble work, he was utterly unable to

extricate himself from the meaner embarrassments which beset him, and died in poverty.

As pointed out in another part of this essay, the author of the "Faerie Queen"—true to the irony of Genius,—was totally disqualified for the stint of earning a subsistence in the ordinary way. In desperation and despair, and "for the sake of his children" (as he put it), he petitioned that august personage, Queen Elizabeth, for aid. This "Good Queen," however, preferred to favour "her darling Essex." And poor Spenser, after he had been mobbed and his house burnt (in which one of his children perished), eventually died in a miserable garret in London. Or, as "O rare Ben Jonson" puts it, "he died for want of bread."

Nor was she (Elizabeth) much kinder to that other truly great and noble man, "her good friend Raleigh," as she was

"graciously" pleased to call him. At the instigation of a rival (Burleigh) he was consigned to prison on what proved to have been a false charge. There he languished for over twelve years, practically buried alive, but withal intent on his "History of the World." After this he was handed over in chains to her successor—another "Good Queen"—who confiscated his property and eventually quenched his genius and "disturbing spirit" on Tower Hill. And thus, alas,—

After long, long years of dungeon's gloom
The world was too mean to grant him room,
And bereft of all but that *narrow bed*,
They put him *there*—minus his head.

The case of heroic Hargreaves, who invented the Spinning-Jenny, was equally lamentable. But, while his project met with no opposition—and, we may also add, with no encouragement—from the authorities, the want of appreciation on the part of the people whom it was designed to benefit, took the form of a malignant

antagonism to this and all other schemes of invention which would eventually, as they thought, do away with hand labour, and their services be dispensed with. Aside from this, however, what made Hargreaves' fate such a hard one was that his grand achievement,—the finale, the triumph of a whole lifetime of anxious thought and arduous toil,—was in the end bastardized, and the true and noble progenitor—as *he* turned out to be—was scorned, hooted, and denounced. And yet, notwithstanding, as it was with many others so with this prodigy of Genius,

While winning his niche in "the Temple of Fame"
They heaped opprobrium on his name,
But the after-math with its tardy amend
Yielded its Amaranth in the end.

We will not continue these harrowing references to the revered host of others appertaining to the "ATROCITIES OF GENIUS." The details are too well known, and sufficient have already been produced to approve our observation in

the beginning of this paper. That the best and most exalted evidence of Liberal progress in the Nineteenth Century is its frank recognition and its generous reward of merit as evolved from that peculiar gift of mind which we call Genius.

So far we have indicated to some extent how these people and their work impress us ; but now let us briefly consider how their performance may and probably did impress *them* at the time. And lingering yet a little longer on that score, it is both interesting and instructive to observe, as in fancy we may, the gushing torrent of emotions evolved in the accomplishment of their remarkable and unique stint.

First, however, let us observe that in the locating of these great deeds and their originators, we find the scene shifting from the darksome, ill-ventilated apartment of the one intent on his writing, to the equally repulsive, ill-smelling

laboratory, and thence, from the malaria and gloom of swamp and wilderness, to the fresher, sweeter ozone of the sea.

In the case of the Courtier Raleigh, we have seen capricious Fortune alternately smiling and frowning ; but much of the time he was permitted to share in such apparent prosperity and fine living as, at least, to embellish, if not to mitigate adversity. With a great many others, however, it was very different. With them, Genius, stripped of all but the skimpiest mantle to cover the flesh, was nearly, if not absolutely, bare to the bone. This, in regard to horseflesh, is called "condition," with them it was the effect of dire necessity. But we do not think the less of them for that, nay, more. And these, even these, who wrought without the enlivening attractions of picturesque accessories appeal none the less strongly to human interest. And so it is that the less courtly visage which masked Genius in a Hargreave, all

absorbed in the intricacies of his "Spinning-Jenny"; Copernicus, revolving in his mind his incomparable "system"; Gilbert, experimenting and introducing to the astonished world the erstwhile latent powers of "Electricity"; Newcomen, who himself engined the "Steam-Engine"; Harrison with his "Chronometer"; Cartwright, with his "Weaving-Loom"; and even Schwarz, with his inceptive but sinister grain of "Gunpowder," all rise to the full dignity and sublimity of their more richly garbed compeers.

And now to come back to the spectacle we proposed to take a glance at. All the time preceding the culminating moment of their marvellous achievement, what thrilling intervals of suspense, and even agony, in the glimpses they were obtaining of a presentment in the new order of things which would, when fully revealed and diffused, revolutionise governments, shatter and reorganise systems and empires, and reform and remould science

and religion. All the time, too, racked, affrighted—almost maddened—with the sensations incident to such momentous forecasts, they persevered, they grappled alone and single-handed with the prejudice, the opposition of authorities who were vindictive, and communities that were blind.

Regarding still the foremost of these pioneers in the great work of civilisation, and spanning periods reaching down nearly to our own, seen as that luminous faculty, imagination, depicts them to us in the near completion of some great design, in the investigation of some stupendous idea—all purely brain work and done without wage, it thrills the stagnant heart of even this far-off, irresponsible generation to think over and fancy, as we are now doing, how it all must have seemed to them. And as we ruminate on those fascinating trial scenes thus presented it requires no magic of the mind, and none of the artificial aid and stimulant of

romance to see and impart some few of the more eloquent features. Nay, thus focussed, on the very verge of discoveries as important in their way as were those of Pinto, Jaques Cartier or Vespucci, with a survey before them that carried them so far beyond the scope hitherto vouchsafed to mortal eye, we do not wonder, now we know, at their exultation, their agony, their felicity, and their tears. As it was with Columbus, at that crucial period of his discovery of the New World, when, superadded to his intolerable uncertainty and anxiety his rebellious and terror-stricken crew threatened to cast him into the sea (as was Hudson), so it was, only in a different way, with those others.

And the situation presented by that intrepid voyager, scanning with fevered desperation the minute particles of a strange, ill-defined vegetation, as it floated past, a veritable godsend in the sea-drift, finds an equal though less romantic

parallel in these other instances of investigation. And keeping in view, then, the turmoil of spirit with which these others watched the long night through preceding the final hour, we see them in imagination as they watched the slowly fleeting shadows, dissolving one by one as the dawn of an everlasting triumph approached. Aye, and what must have been the startling, all-engrossing effect as the refulgent, glorious day broke.—And what that dazzling vision as in the resplendent perspective of indomitable genius and in the solution of its all-defining power the veil was lifted. Ah, those fevered brains, those appealing eyes ! And then, behold, they witness, as in the acme of a gorgeous transformation scene, the full development of that unique and mighty revelation.

All engrossed, as we commonly are, in our own exclusive affairs, we are apt to find it a trifle difficult to rise to occasions like this, demanding as they do a peculiar responsiveness that with some would seem

to even belittle their own prodigious importance. They may have the medium, but lack the elevating tendency, nay,

Full fledged in mind and phantasy
To explore the realm which others see,
Like the barn-yard fowl that haunts the sty
Endowed with wings they're unable to fly.

And yet, notwithstanding this drawback, how interesting, how imposing, even to the least susceptible temperament, must seem that rare faculty which, in the manner we have attempted to describe, could thus propitiate and divine those supreme mysteries whose secrets never before told to mortal ear they alone, in rapture, listened to—aye, and with trembling fingers noted down, to be transcribed later and garnered amongst the muniments of a nation's glory and utilised for the commonweal of mankind.

And finally, if in invoking the sombre shades of these defunct worthies, and if in

recalling to mind those brighter examples of poverty and genius the tear-drop of an irrepressible emotion would yield to them, at this late day, that simple but heartfelt tribute of a well-deserved sympathy, there is a welcome satisfaction and a grateful relief in the thought and in the spectacle of those more retrieving hours when they—even they—were happy and rejoiced.

Though literally starving, as some of them were at the period of their greatest efforts, herein lay their compensation and delight. Hunger might, and did, crave and the bowels complain, but what recked they of an empty larder, of cold privation, and protest. What temptation had a feast been to them apart from their darling project? What cared they for darksome places when the noon-day outside were obscurity compared with that opening, refulgent star of their gleaming immortality. And now, as we take a last

glance back at them and behold them in the isolation of their silent, mission, fixed, mute, and motionless,—in the gloom antecedent to the then impending denouement, as the flickering aurora of the final triumph is straining at its dusky confines, we hold our breath, even as they did, in wrapt attention to see it burst upon a slumbering world. Ah, and how vividly does it all call to mind those kindred recollections when on—

That dusky eve so long gone by
We viewed a comet in the sky,
Or in the lonely vigil on the deep
Watched the Moon rise from her sleep.

Aye, nor does it require an over-vivid imagination on our part to conceive the exultation of thought, that felicity of spirit on their part as they, too, not only watched, but controlled and guided that other luminous stranger in a firmament all their own.

When in the end these men—these outcasts from the more exclusive circle of a degenerate chivalry—paid Nature her little account the most of them left their other debts to be liquidated by posterity. But the preliminary ordeal so inadequately depicted here was the onerous burden they themselves bore, outside of those minor obligations, to propitiate their mission and appease their clamouring compatriots—all on account of that perilous gift of rare mental endowment which it was their unhappy lot to have possessed.

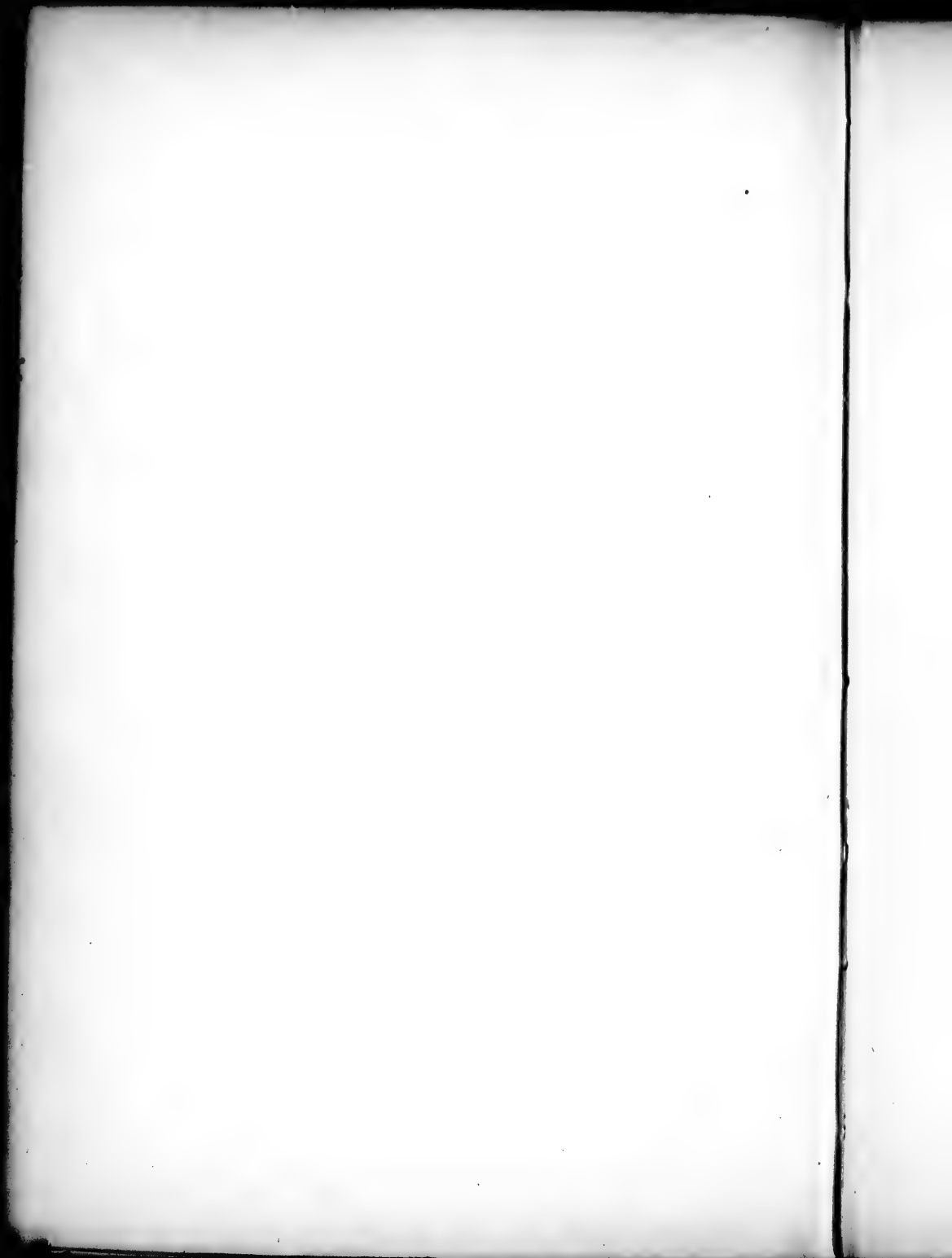
And thus, when called finally from projects which had literally enthralled both mind, thought and body—when aroused from their preoccupation by that fateful summons which none may ignore, they cheerfully and gladly responded. Nay, the blast of that mighty bugle-note which now called them hence had been so far hushed and delayed, until the final master-stroke had been given, when, like Wolfe at Quebec

and as Nelson at Trafalgar, they exchanged,
in the incense of victory, a perishable
Mortality for an imperishable Fame !



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BRIAR-WHIFFS.



Briar-Whiffs.

(THOUGHTS suggested on meeting with an old schoolfellow who had suffered nearly if not quite all the "ills that flesh is heir to," but was still the same old "gay Lothario" as in the days of his pernicious youth. And notwithstanding his chronic state of what is vulgarly termed "stone broke," was more jolly and cheerful than many who have nothing more to complain about than their inability to think just what it is they want.)

That evening, as I fondled my briar-wood, thought simmered on this fresh example of "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," and my pencil, striking out a line of its own, left the following traces of a somewhat prolonged and ironical reverie.

It would seem, then, that in the many untoward vicissitudes of this life, Nature casts the *Ægis* of her incomparable shield over the very wounds she herself conspires to inflict ; infusing therein that restoring, compensating balsam which almost makes the occasion of her kindly ministration one of felicitation rather than of condolence. In the elaboration of this train of thought, we may say furthermore :—that it is through the medium of this peculiar attribute we are cheated (although that word sounds harsh and misplaced) into, at least, partial contentment, if not supreme satisfaction. And that, too, despite the most adverse conditions.

Time-worn and disfigured, aged and wizened, it is through the witching agency of this invaluable quality that we are enabled to discern, not only new traits, but a keener appreciation of old ones ; and that, too, in opposition to common sense and in the very face of our own physical

and moral deformity. Heretofore, we may have thought and cared very little for Nature's bounty, so admirably displayed and so badly used, in a set of good teeth. But now that we dread to open our mouth, even now, how fondly we cleave to the broken stump with its tiny castle of gold; how greatly enhanced our appreciation of what remains; nay, what gratification is inspired by the continued possession of a well-filled but decayed old tooth, and what roguish delight in an innocent and youngish wig, a stuffed calf, or that masterpiece of deception, a glass eye. The brightest manifestations of its soothing effect, however, is displayed in our darker hours. 'Tis then that under the influence of its all-potent spell we are enabled to calm our perturbed spirit, and turn a deaf ear to the sharpest "crack of doom." Nay, even on the rack of a death-dealing pain, face to face with the otherwise frightful spectre of approaching dissolution, the conscious victim is no longer appalled, and bodily suffering

relaxing its rigours, Nature radiates in a smile.

So, too, in those milder cases of personal bereavement. The strong man may grapple with the last hard line; but his lamentation ceases as he turns a new leaf; and then, behold, as he reads with renewed zest a fresh page of life's story, how soon does he forget the blot or the pang that he just turned down.

Nor are the numerous examples of this indefinable but salutary comforter confined to the sterner sex alone. It obtains a lodgment and a welcome nesting place in the more clinging tendril of the human vine.

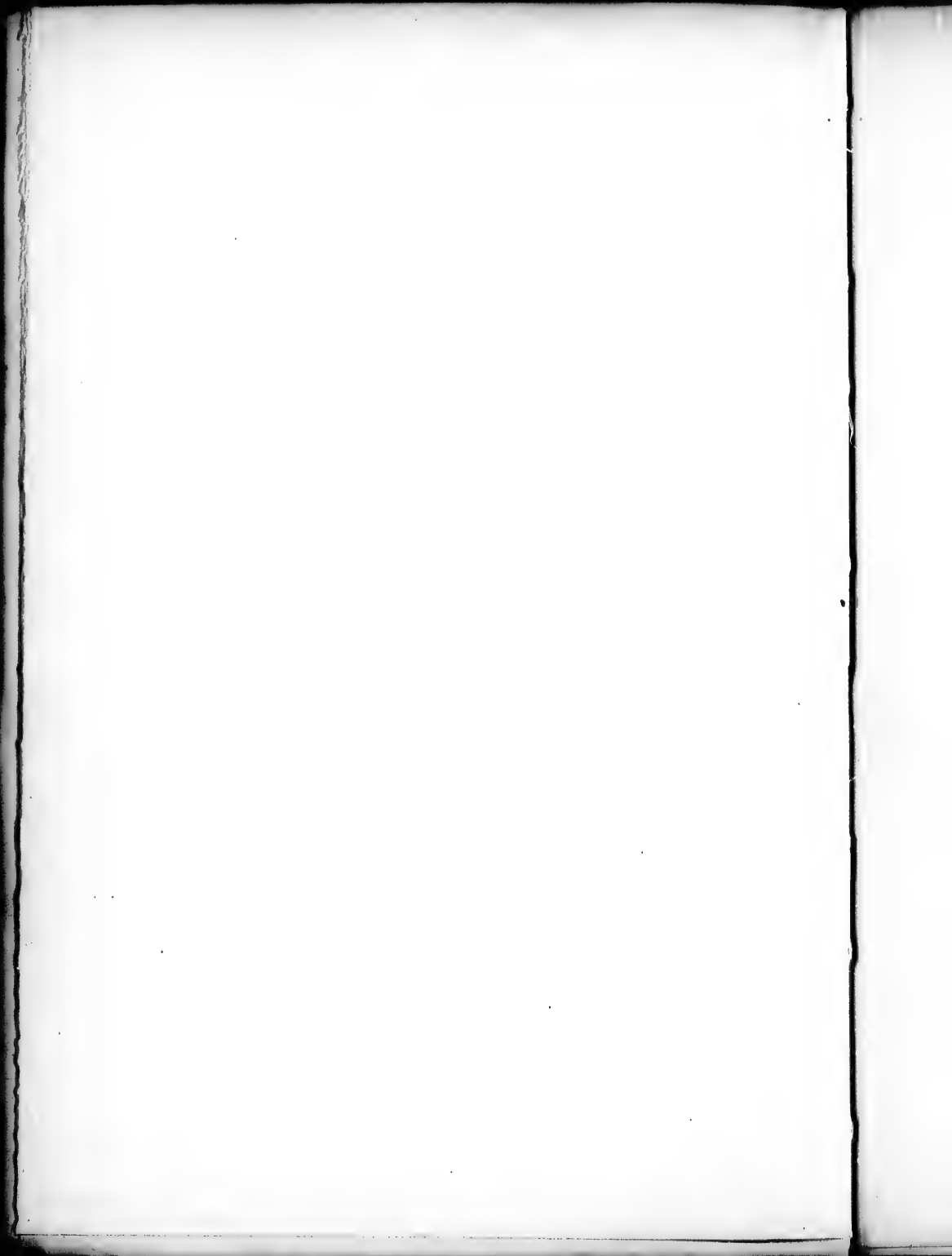
The stricken beauty of a frailer gender
Bewails her grief—
But she does her hair with renewed care,
And dries her tears
In the early dawn of lapsing years.

Nay, however deeply she may mourn,
Vanity cannot long remain forlorn,
And poor fidelity—
Shivering in the chill of dear devotion,
Cleaves, all the same,
To the grateful solace of a warmer flame.

Then, presto !
Love, toying dreamily with Nature's wand,
Her gloom vanishes in the impulse to respond,
And deep in the anguish of those brimming eyes
Cupid darts the unction of his sweet surprise.



THE BYGONES OF HISTORY.



The Bygones of History.

PART FIRST.

As much as we may be disposed in these "up-to-date" times to taboo the past, we must admit that it has always exerted a very strong influence on the present. And yet, in accord with the confidence and self-assurance which is such a prominent characteristic of this age, it would appear that that influence was largely on the wane. If this be true, then in some respects it is a hopeful sign as tending to a less sectional and a more cosmopolitan feeling. In other words, the world is fast giving over its vassalage to patriarchs, and thinking and acting more on its own responsibility.

It would seem from this that people were caring less and less for what was

said or done centuries ago. And if this also be true, while it may in a measure do away with much of our regard for old-time faiths, rites, and observances connected therewith, these in their turn may be presumed to carry away with them their inseparable graft of grudge, feud, and enmity. Thus, with a rejuvenated sense of kindness and good-fellowship we might be expected to regard with more indulgence and magnanimity those few who still adhere to ancient lines, and are not yet, as it would seem to us, "out of the wilderness."

Now, regarding our diminished estimate of the value of this heritage of former times, or at least a part of it, insomuch as it is due to natural causes, we are justified in our repudiation; or, at any rate, such a modification as may make it applicable to our time. And here let us observe that one cogent reason for our partial defection or alienation from the past would seem to be due to a natural

defect in the records. This comes about through no fault of ours, and may be attributed to two causes: one, our belief in the honesty and correctness of those records; the other, our misinterpretation and perversion of dicta coming down to us through misleading channels from those far-off sources.

As bearing upon this important point, we may call attention to a significant feature; this is, that all languages, as vehicles of thought, are undergoing a *peculiar* and gradual *change*. I mean by this that a sentence which may be written to-day on any subject will not be read to convey precisely the same meaning after the lapse of any considerable time. The truth of this is made manifest if regarded from a retrospective point of view, and in our difficulty in reading and deciphering what was written very long ago. And this change, this *drift* in language, would seem to indicate an *oblivious* tendency to conceal rather than to reveal the past.

We observe this peculiar drift from old bearings, in many things ; and especially in language. Taking, as we have said, a fragment of writing produced to-day and reproduced a number of generations hence—judging from the past—owing to the change which is constantly going on in our phraseology, while the meaning might not be entirely obliterated, the original meaning would not be conveyed. And this, owing to that subtle tendency to obscurity which, as we only too well know, has given rise to so much confusion and controversy. Instances of the truth of this, relatively speaking, are innumerable. Take, for instance (what we have termed here), the drift of language with the Greek. It has changed so much from what was once his mother tongue that if some one of his early progenitors were to come to life and say “ Good morning ” he would not understand what the good man meant. Nay, and if we take English names as an example, the good man would not recognise his own name if he

saw it in print. The progress of this change or drift in language, like that of the Swiss glacier, is very gradual, but is, nevertheless, sufficiently rapid that the townspeople of the present day find the same difficulty in understanding the "patois," or old style of speech, once in vogue, but which, with the more advanced ones, has become obsolete.

To counteract this relapsing tendency, so destructive to our means of communication with the past, the expediency might be very plausibly suggested to re-write from time to time and revise those records which we would care to preserve. In doing this, however, the original at once loses its virtue as an antecedent property, and may be regarded then something in the same light as a modern reproduction of a Noah's Ark. At the same time, this expedient to some extent explains why we take a writing which comes out to-day in preference to the older one, twenty, fifty, or a hundred years ago.

(The point which I have taken some pains to present here need not necessarily obtain in the case of our Bible, on the ground of its being an inspired work, and if inspired in the beginning, why not to the end ?) If there be any virtue in this presentment, as here pointed out, it may in a measure explain also the falling off in public interest concerning our chronicles of the past. It also indicates a very serious drawback to our interpretation and acceptance of records ; especially those which are presented to us in that more impressionable and inflatable form which we call "History."

History, as we see it, is an ever-increasing aftergrowth of dubious fact, to which each successive writer has added his irresponsible contribution to suit his own individual taste and opinion as modified by sectional prejudice and party spirit. The old trunk or tree, so to speak, being utilised to elevate and sustain a prodigious superstructure of partially artificial but

none the less pleasing and beguiling verbiage. And this constitutes another misleading blinder almost certain to lead us astray. I mean this grassing over of the footprints of those who have passed along ; till presently those less presentable skeleton facts are presented to our admiring gaze restored to the flesh but disguised in a mantle embroidered by romance. And here the question naturally suggests itself, how much are we indebted to this class of writers for their voluntary and unrestricted estimate of other men's productions and their reversion of their version ? Amongst other peculiarities of historical writing and its producers we find as a rule they never fail to record their "mountain" of prejudice with the same unimpeachable solemnity with which they eke out their "molehill" of truth. And while this may be dislodged eventually by their successors, the subtraction would only seem to leave the more room for other views and impressions, which in their turn may be equally in fault and equally objectionable.

We may care very little what transpired or what some individual delivered himself of centuries ago. As a rule we do not. And yet the more conservative, not to say better, instincts of our nature may be aroused and justly take offence, even very long after an event, to see the principal actor—the hero or heroine—maligned, belittled, or perhaps wiped out altogether. While the mission and *raison d'être* of the historian is presumably to present a new budget of “facts,” he, no doubt, finds it convenient to make away with a good many old ones. Of course, in doing this he puts himself in rivalry with champions who were in the same field of intellectual labour as himself. These latter, however, having passed away, are not given the opportunity of rebutting this new indictment concerning their knowledge and veracity. We must admit the temptation is very great to thus discredit one's predecessors. Otherwise what more need be done than, with a work of so far unimpeached

authority (say, Hume's), to endorse on the fly-leaf, "Approved and highly recommended." This they do not do; and on the strength of the fresher views and opinions the older one is disqualified. And so to keep up with the times we must appeal to Jones, Smith, or Ferguson, who has cropped up later, and according to him we are chagrined to find that much we have taken time and pains to store up as available "historical fact" has become obsolete and worthless.

I am not setting myself up against history. Nay, far from it. I may even go so far as to confess that the "flowery" and "unreliable" parts are those that please me most. And aside from the exceptions taken here, I can see no objection to a new history of a country coming out fresh once a year. The more we get of them the more imaginative they become, and that is what I like. Besides, if it is all accepted as genuine fact, what difference need it

make though a good part of it be fiction? Nay, it passes current, and we may take on as much as we are able, and make it answer the purpose, until, alas, we shall have lived long enough to see it repudiated or proved counterfeit.

While the foregoing is rather suggestive of that view, it would certainly be a thankless task, even if it could be done, to show that since the dawn of our enlightenment the world has been virtually plunged into even greater obscurity by the flood of elucidation. Be this as it may, the surmise is sufficiently rational, nevertheless, not to be too hastily expelled as absurd and paradoxical. Then, too, there is one very ugly feature about those writers who have undertaken to reproduce the older chronicles of the past, and one which makes the growing coldness observable in our regard for them what we have termed here "a good sign."—It is that most regrettable partisanship which has perverted and distinguished the one-

sided efforts of our ablest writers. And instead of endeavouring to dissipate and harmonise the jarring, galling elements of ill-will and discord, they have replanted and fostered the seeds of that prolific and baleful growth—antagonism. In this respect they are no better and no worse than politicians and demagogues in the less demonstrative and more innocent guise of journalists and historians. Nay, if these men had thought less of exploiting their abilities at the expense of their fellows, and busied themselves more in distinguishing and propitiating redeeming traits among their self-constituted opponents, they would have made more friends and less enemies for the human race. And the same thing applies to-day.

A recent English writer of history has only lately discovered that King Henry the Eighth (who made so many mistakes in matrimony) possessed a large preponderance of really excellent qualities. Also, that Richard the Third was nothing

like so bad as he has been represented. This is a move, tardy as it is, in the right direction ; and if it would only be followed up it will be an interesting speculation to calculate how many bad characters may yet be redeemed from historical purgatory.

Nay, we do not mind how many *bad* ones are thus disposed of, but how about their doing away with *good* ones ? We get to feeling after awhile like forgiving them for exploding numerous interesting theories, and for disqualifying certain highly esteemed historical authorities. At the same time, how can we suffer the more daring of these ruthless spell-breakers to swoop down upon those beautiful creations of rare imagery so happily blended with reality as to have become part and parcel of legitimate fact. The offspring of questionable parentage they may have been, and probably were. And yet they were adopted by the venerable sponsors who stand by at the

christening of human events, and later on, absolved of the taint of spurious birth, they have succeeded in winning our highest esteem and attained to all the virtues of an ideal perfection. Amongst these cherished affinities of the past, and garnered in our libraries, are thrilling narratives of love and devotion, of courage, perseverance, and self-sacrifice. With what a pang, then, of long dormant, perhaps, but not yet quite extinct, boyish affection and regret do we abandon our belief and surrender our faith in those delicious deceptions which ennoble and beautify the story of generations so nearly akin to our own—aye, in whose dust they fructify, and in whose memory they bloom.

The most forward of these would not seem to have the temerity to question or disturb the even more marvellous episodes in the lives of saints and other astounding phenomena of an apocryphal date. Nay, it were a damnable offence to

doubt that the sun once stood still at man's command ; that the " jaw-bone of an ass," wielded by mortal prowess in the mighty arm of Faith, accomplished on one occasion a greater loss of life than could have been done in the same time by a modern battle-ship. We do not seek to revise or modify that most remarkable instance of human vitality and preservation recorded of Jonah and the whale ; we are severely conservative of the reproofing serpent who enjoined virtue on the frail member of our human co-partnership ; then why encourage the wanton destruction and clearing away of the only plants that bloom on those mouldering sepulchres ? Why question the authenticity and right to live of those nearer and dearer examples of " profane " heroism which purify and embellish those earlier records of our ancestral and national life ? According to these latter versionists, William Tell has dwindled down to a very commonplace individual—a mere rag-and-bone man—

who never had any son at all, and never shot a bow in his life. Ah, but I can remember, and not so long ago either, when the heartrending but fascinating story of this erstwhile loving father and champion archer, shooting the apple off his son's head, held the place of honour on the front page of my school reader. And then there was not a shadow of doubt but that it was all true as Gospel. This is only one instance, but there are numerous others.

And bearing upon this point, we are sorrowfully reminded of a late publication by an American author. Here, again, we see the hand of the exultant iconoclast raised as thumbs once were in the Coliseum at Rome. In this case, however, it is not the miserable existence of some doughty gladiator that is in jeopardy, but the story of two precious lives in our nation's history. There is a flourish of that ruthless quill—a subterranean rumble is heard—the foundations of our national

archives tremble and quake — then, presto! That blazoned tablet, whereupon the posterity of Columbia were wont to see portrayed the love and devotion, the nobility and sacrifice of a heathen girl, shivers like a lantern screen and dissolves for ever away. Aye, and the sublime tableau of Pocahontas saving the life of the heroic Smith becomes a mere blank sheet, an empty space, a darksome chasm, wherein the Mephistopheles of history casts all the sweetest creations of human fancy. Nay, let us hope that they do not perish for good, but will reappear, from time to time, in other and just as beautiful forms of so-called “facts,” to enchant and delight and deceive successive generations of juveniles yet to come.

It may be presumed from the foregoing that the view taken would discountenance both history and the reading of it. This may be so to a certain extent, but until the glamour is dissipated we regard it in a different light. And, more-

over, those of us who may not be altogether abandoned to fiction *as fiction*, that which is presented in a presumably genuine historical form is by far the most interesting, as it purports to represent what actually occurred, and the depreciation only obtaining as we become disillusionized. And for the matter of that, notwithstanding the little value we get to place on history as a record of actual cold-blooded fact, its very florescence is beautiful and entertaining. Then, too, taken, as it always is, as the commonly accepted standard of truth, it passes, as does the current coinage of the realm, and thus maintains its honourable character until impeached and superseded. What need we care, even when it comes to that, that a Boston man, by the name of Bryant, has undertaken and partially proven that the heroic episode in the life of the Indian maiden referred to was a historical bon-bon and a felicitous falsehood? What need we care that Smith or Ferguson has set to work and grubbed up evidence to

show that Cœur de Lion was a cruel marauder, that Rob Roy was a very ordinary sort of thief, Monmouth a sniveller, and Wallace a ruffian? Aye, what difference does it make to us that it has lately been established as a "fact" that Wellington did *not* say, at Waterloo, "Up, Guards, and at them," and that Nelson, at Trafalgar, did *not* hoist the signal, "England this day expects every man to do his duty"? They may prove to us (and they have) that William Tell was a myth or something worse. But the William Tell embalmed in story and in song is become a permanent graft on the old stock—no matter what he was—and lives and fructifies in our esteem and enjoyment; and so mote it be with all the others. What matters it, indeed, whether or not that Christ himself ever came into the world as the son of the Virgin Mary? And why? Because the mortal mould in which he was fashioned perished with the flesh, and the new birth found its incomparable function in the

womb of centuries of devout belief to make
his purpose and existence tantamount to
an accomplished fact !





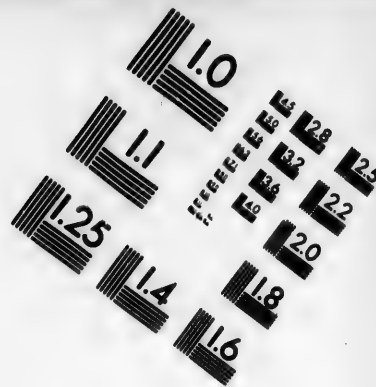
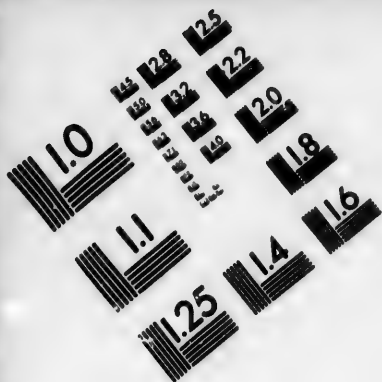


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Bygones.

PART SECOND.

THERE would seem to be a more remarkable significance than is commonly given it in the meaning conveyed by the sentence, "Let the dead bury their dead." And whether we directly conform to that injunction or not the dictation would seem to enforce obedience to its mandate. And this for the simple reason that their records for the most part—and despite all efforts to the contrary—are virtually buried with them; and that these also vanish eventually is strongly evidenced by the comparatively little we know of the past. Aye, and we may also add the little seemingly we *care* to know of

it. Love and affection may and do cling for awhile to the souvenir of the departed friend, but seek comfort of the living; and affliction's deepest wound finds a ready balsam in forgetfulness. Aside, however, from the storied past and its more heroic features there is no love, no affection, no conservatism.

No doubt one may feel a peculiar interest in the few relics we possess of "Ye Olden Times." And yet the feeling with which we are most likely to regard these is that their venerable appearance and antique associations commend them to our curiosity, otherwise we are repelled by a sense of alienation. This not only applies to old ruins and crumbling shreds of personal effects, but to old books as well. A book written only a few centuries ago we find it extremely difficult to read, and the meaning obscure: and the difference in the phraseology which creates this confusion, even in what was written in one's own language, is forcibly significant

of that oblivious tendency to which we have drawn attention. Amongst the shreds of a still earlier period, some amongst us may glory in fragmentary writings, the purport of which is a matter of wonder and guesswork. Then, again, we may come across a tuft of real hair, a genuine molar, or other belongings of human and animal remains. These and a few crumbled remains of old castles, with hardly a word to tell us their story, constitute the sole material for the modern articulation of the skeleton past. As applied to our records, these sparse and disconnected remains of former existence constitute virtually the only substantial evidences to give a tangibility to those vanished days. And in this respect they might be regarded as the black dots of a former composition, each one, possibly, representing an epoch or a civilisation. Thus, comparatively speaking, do these remains—these black dots—punctuate the musty chronicles of past peoples and events, the blank spaces being virtually

filled up, as we have before noted, to suit the taste, opinion, or prejudice of subsequent generations.

Curious as are many of these old relics in form and substance, so are many of the ill-fitting and grotesque appurtenances with which we oftentimes find them clothed. And thus suggesting without clearly defining the rules of living, customs, and ceremonials appertaining to their day, our actual knowledge becomes mere assumption, and assurance little better than surmise. Chronologically, dead as it all is, most of it is too far removed for rational investigation. Nay, personified and given the attributes of a once sentient being, it is difficult to take its stiff, pulseless hand, clammy with the damp and slime of mouldering centuries, and feel in its touch any of the instinct of persuasion, and none of the magical inspiration that may have distinguished the zenith of its vital power.

This, of course, is the wintry aspect of the long-gone-by stripped of its after-growth of floral exotic. In opposition to this view, one may say: it is so much more congenial to favour than condemn; so much more natural to preserve than to destroy; and predisposed to feel, as most of us do, that the treasure of the dead is the birthright of the living, we would accept it all without question. Nay, more, we would not only discourage but resent any effort to impugn or belittle it. Indeed, we may rationally presume that in the perusal and adaptation of the sayings and doings of the defunct world, even as we find them, and re-animating and blending them in our every-day life, we utilise past experience and lengthen our existence.

Now, this would be all very right and proper if these memoirs of the dead world did them justice, and if all we read about them was inspired by the same friendly and magnanimous

spirit. But such is not the case. And as the medium, as many of them are, of old-time dispute, enmity and hostility, they are not only a scandalous libel on our race, but, in perpetuating the same inimical feeling, they keep mankind divided into clans, factions, denominations, and sects. And all of these being bitterly opposed to each other, it so far militates against the fraternal weal of mankind as to make an appeal to arms seem a patriotic and commendable recourse, and our seeming accord, at other times, no whit better than a mere transient lull in the interim of an armed neutrality. In this dilemma we may be excused if the fruitless query suggests itself, "What would be our status if the past could be wiped out?" In other words: if we had no records extending appreciably beyond our own times, if we had no political theses, no theology, no history, how might we be affected? Well, although such a proposition may sound Nihilistic, it may not be without its

saving grace. For, even then, we might have something in the nature of what we call religion, and not be wanting in ability to institute certain rules of living. That grim old bastille, Creed, however, which has so long and so cruelly sought to imprison the soul, would, in its turn, mingle with the dust which it denounced; and as the vestibule of an ideal purgatory, it would vanish. Aye, and with it its faithful progeny of monumental animosities. Ah, in many respects what a grand turning over of a new leaf that would be! Then, the iniquity which could make it seem righteous to damn an infant before it was born would yield to humaner instinct; and that curse which blasted the fair fame of our race centuries ago would be consigned to the appropriate realm of its own diabolical invention. And sin,—ah, poor, miserable, degraded sin, which looks so ugly in our neighbour's glass, and so excusably winsome in our own, would be, like the new order of things, in its infancy. And yet,

though bereft of its pedigree, it would not seem so ineligible to forgiveness and ultimate salvation. Nay, and with a record thus cleansed of the past we should feel, in a measure, restored to the new-born democracy of primitive virtue.

This may be all wrong, and sound, as I have said, Nihilistical and even censurable. It will, however, be understood that such a contingency is only suggested here, in a speculative way, as bearing on certain things that it would seem rather a blessing if we were rid of ; but most certainly, not with a view to discounting many other things for which we owe those redeeming minds of past generations an eternal debt of gratitude. And yet, bearing this qualification in mind, in that all-predominant question of our future beyond the brief and insignificant span of this world's vexed existence, it is nevertheless true that we may accomplish more with newer appliances and can even see our way clearer not to look back.

Nay, it is not on the battered tablets of those earlier times, not amongst the uncertain hieroglyphics of an obsolete age, that we need seek to find the solution of that exalted mystery of present need and ultimate destiny; but rather in the revelation unfolded to the simplest understanding in all we see, in all we hear, and in all we feel!—and this, too, as impressed upon our minds, our sight, our senses, by the manifold ways of Nature,—her prolific abundance and her omniscient conservatism! what more can we ask, what more need we care to know?

Therein, indeed, do we divine and greet the gladsome presages of a kindly fate,—not in the extinction but in the eternal reproduction of all things appertaining to our beautiful and fructifying world. And while there is nothing in language or in script which can add to or subtract from the least significant of those gratifying expressions of an all-prevailing Providence, the equipoise in

supply and need so admirably adjusted and maintained is, of itself, a proclamation of universal amnesty beyond the ken of Hierarch or Potentate to stint or enlarge.

The "word" as we read it there, instead of percolating through the musty catacombs of obsolete scholardom, or through the more modern but no less irresponsible dust of mouldering experts, comes direct from the living fountain of that great heart which throbs in unison and sympathy with our own. Aye, and whose ever-rejuvenating power, not only vitalises and sustains all forms of existence, but sees and provides for each new second of life !



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A HEATHEN GOD.

A Heathen God.

As indicated in the foregoing it was through the medium of Nature's Book that the Creator first and last revealed Himself to man. In opposition to this the impression which our doctrinal tutors seek to convey that the Great Author of all things should have been practically unknown and unadored prior to the date of our comparatively modern Christianity is neither just nor humane. And here again our literary contributors, catering not only to sectional prejudice and doctrinal policy, but also to the White Man's Dominion, judiciously endeavour to make the existence and worship of the Supreme Being, not only in primitive times, but latterly, amongst the tribal inhabitants of the Globe, as unreasonable, barbarous, and grotesque,

as possible. Indeed, the murky darkness of their benighted day, as thus defined, without as it is presumed our sun, has been made to appear as forbidding and repulsive as words can paint it. And all this for the manifest reason that it may heighten and lend a more lurid glare, and significance in contrast with our own modern enlightenment. Now, it is only patent, perhaps to those who may be disposed to think, and think kindly and dispassionately, how severe this glaring illumination, with its fiery tongues, must be on those who have been or are so unfortunate as to belong to the earlier period and the darker sphere. Again, if we were thoughtful and reasonable enough to ask ourselves the reason for this we need not wait long for an answer. With the big-headed few, opinions dictate actions. But with the masses it is all the other way. Thus, let one or two shout "mad-dog" at the aborigine, and all the rest will join in the "hue and cry." This action, however,

so precipitated by the few who dictate proceedings, is no better and no worse than a hound-like and inhuman expedient to discredit and to oust the original proprietors of the soil. And while the savage spirit engendered of this species of man-hunt pursues the wretched fugitive to his eternal sanctuary, it stops there only to bay at his soul beyond the grave !

Of course it don't do to talk this way in the furthering of our efforts to promote and to sanctify those far-off African Missions which are the precursors of the white man's usurpation. Nay, and which, as an invariable rule, precede conquest, subjugation, and tribal extinction. Ah ! first the explorer, then the missionary, then the soldier ! and, presto ! the tragedy of Spanish invasion and the doomed Aztec is re-enacted. Now, as it was then, in those unguent spasms of evangelical solicitude, as we cast the refulgent beams of our luminous piety into the darker

corners of Heathendom, both past and present, we are wont to lament the presumed absence of the Holy Ghost, where our exclusive mediums of divine revelation may not have penetrated. And yet, notwithstanding the potent leverage of public opinion to the contrary, as evidenced by that hue and cry before mentioned, there may be some amongst us who may even more righteously venture on the assumption that the earlier inhabitants of our globe, as well as those like them contemporary with ourselves, have been and are as sincere in their homage to our common creator as are we in the present day. Nay, more, that they commended themselves to that higher approbation as acceptably as do we now. It is true that their manners and customs, as represented to us, may and do seem absurd and even hideous. Their forms of worship, especially, are made to appear grotesque, and even cruel. But were they any more so than ours up to the time of the Reformation, and even since ?

And may not much that seemed so objectionable be due to our misinterpretation, and to those cruder appliances of theirs which contrast so unfavourably with our more cultured methods. Nay, more, may we not presume, and justly so, that their ceremonials, while being unsophisticated, were simple and heart-felt; and that though symbolical they were all the more efficiently adapted to the crude, undisciplined habits and thoughts of a people or tribe who, with all the damnable characteristics attributed to them, never wanted in true devotion to, nor lacked a guileless confidence in, the scriptless muniments of their faith.

In this connection we may even venture still further, though we risk giving offence to our own denomination in doing so.

And to any one of the countless millions belonging to our Christian conservatory, who would conscientiously know what good influence, if any, might possibly

have saved "those poor creatures," and still succour those like them, and to all those who wonder what sort of a Deity they could have had, and may still have, I trust it may not be deemed blasphemous for me to say.

Throw down the garbled volumes that distort and asperse the story of their darkened lives ! Crawl out of the gutters and sluiceways that feed without cleansing the foetid sewers of your gluttonous "culture" ! Mount up into the higher regions of sunlight and pure air,—up, like Moses did, to the highest pinnacle of some lofty eminence,—and there, instead of closing your eyes in saintly communion, open them wide and feast your vision on all you see ! Then, if with all your senses steeped in contemplation, you for a time lose all consciousness of self ; if in response to the tempting allurements of that incomparable spectacle the captive spirit for once plays truant to its nagging catechism ; if your stingy creed, with its

cramped little church, and all the peevish ones who wrangle there dwindle away to nothingness, and are lost to thought ; if then and there, in the rapture of an irrepressible emotion, you extend your hands, and exclaim, " How grand ! how " beautiful ! how sublime !"—Then shall you, in the echo of your own impulsive praise, receive not only the answer as to who was and is the God of the heathen, but you will also imbibe withal a better and a more genuine conception of the true Spirit of Religion.

It is this Spirit—call it what you will—that permeates every human heart ;—and while its ubiquity excludes none, the response which it inspires may find expression in a variety of ways, and constitutes the sincerest and holiest of all communions.

While civilised nations derive their impressions from books, the uninitiated dwellers of the earth,—the so-called savage

and barbarians — left to primitive resources, are all the more acutely sensitive to the outward and visible signs of a Supreme Deity. To them the forest, the prairie, the hills, the mountain range, are simply portions of the carnal drapery of one all-prevailing personality. This indefinable presence, requiring no art of embellishment to make it conceivably more august, may take such peculiar and distinctive form as interminable custom or tradition prescribes. Hence those rudely carved images and bits of moulded clay which we term idols. These may seem idolatrous, and even worse to us, but regarded in the light of what they comprehend they assume a sacred character, and thus—

As the tiniest drops of ocean's brine,
All the elements of the sea combine ;
As tokens of affection from a friend,
The face and form of the giver blend ;
So the tree, the flower, the water-fall,
May symbolise Him who gave us all.

There is a form whose outline is the perfect symmetry of the universe, and the harmony of whose parts is the faultless blending of creation !—His spirituality, is Heaven itself.—His substance, the earth. We look up to the sky and view the benign attributes of His beaming countenance, and in the general aspect of this incomparable Being we behold, in wonder, all the superb phenomena of Nature !

This is the God of the heathen and the Grand Manito of the red man. He speaks to them in the roar of the tempest, He whispers in the breeze ; He prattles in the brooklet, He murmurs in the sea : and the humblest and meanest of tribal mortality require none of the auxiliaries of classic lore to teach them WHO OR WHAT HE IS !

* * * *

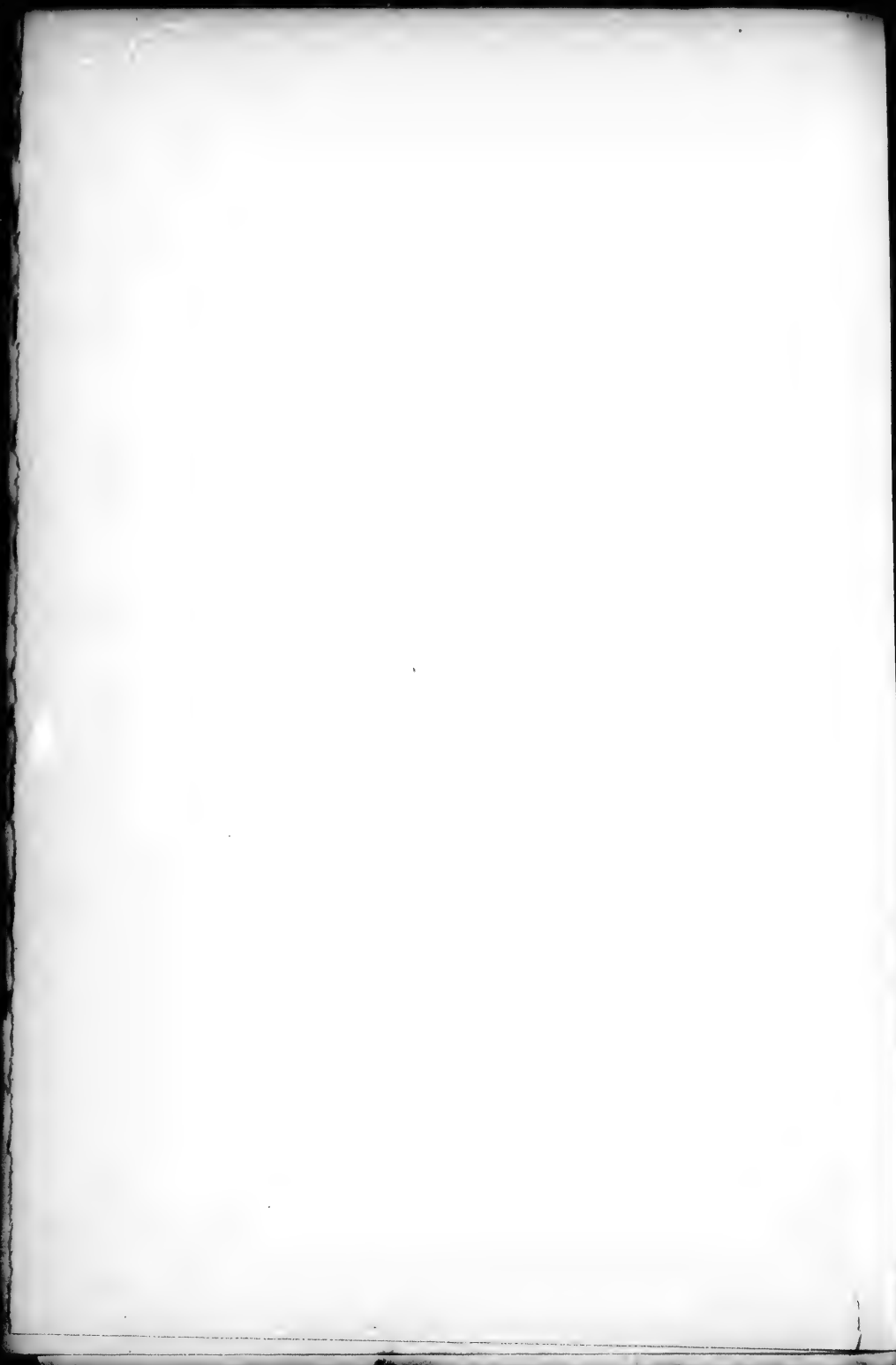
And, finally : How, let us ask, does the revelation of this all-dominant Spirit in

our more cultured and subsidized worship contrast with that of the heathen, from his point of view.

The geologist amongst the rocks crumbles a bit of earth in the hollow of his hand, and seems lost in the perplexity of abstruse analysis. The child of the forest near him, folding his arms in contempt of the grovelling radical, divines a sublimer feature in the grand tableau of Nature outspread before him. Then, lifting his glistening eyes in the proud consciousness of a nobler perception, he sees in the majestic profile of the mountain-side, the contour of the SUPREME !—and in the uplifted arm of some lofty crag, a gesture of the OMNIPOTENT !



THE BEGGAR'S DOWER.



The Beggar's Dower.

As he lies on his back,
He ransacks his pack,
To find that his dower
Is in Nature's bower ;
And all dead-beat,
With his aching feet,
He turns to this mistress
In his distress.

Ah, he strengthens appreciation,
By his very emaciation ;
And rendered less opaque,
In the absence of steak,
He doffs his " old tile "
With a luminous smile.

Nay, he need only see
To find the key
To a treasure
Without measure ;
But all he finds
In Nature's mines
Is not "treasure trove"
To those who rove.

Alas, with all her contribution,
What's the need of destitution ?
Where's the gospel of division
That yields so little of God's provision,
And pampering Mammon's every wish,
Denies poor Poverty her loaf and fish.

Nay, 'tis that resistance
To subsistence,
Where potent might
Makes famine right !
And with so much
So near his clutch
He may starve !
But he must not touch.

Ah, in our community of fellowship
There is the bane of ownership !
If he pluck one leaf
He is a thief,
And worse than a tramp
Becomes a scamp.



MINE AND THINE.

Mine and Thine.

PART I.

ON THE GIFT OF A WHIP.

(To W. K. L.)

1.

I got something for somebody not long ago,
 And thought in the giving to make the least show,
 So I made the inscription as brief as I could.
 And left all the rest to be understood.

2.

But after the trinket had left my possession,
 I found in its stead a deeper impression ;
 It had come and gone, but in its place
 Was inspired a feeling these lines will trace.

3.

To make my meaning sufficiently plain
An obliging spirit will further explain,
That I bo't a whip the other day
All for the pleasure of giving away.

4.

'Twas only a trifle, and yet as a token
Of kindly words that go unspoken,
It would imply in a useful way
Much that I felt, but could not say.

5.

'Twas not that in giving I did not feel
All that was meant in that mute appeal;
And I lingered long ere I sent it away
To find fit expression for all I would say.

6.

Kind words with honeyed accents pled
To voice the sentiments left unsaid,
And while I'd sent them if I could,
They were left to be understood.

7.

Among the many left behind,
There are a few I call to mind ;
But even here I must be brief,
And put the binder round the sheaf.

8.

And this reminds me, I was not so hard
That I did not think of the old white barb,
And the query rose just how she'd take
To my present for the master's sake.

9.

This thing I was sending all so fair,
Is not always handled with such care,
As when selected was the thought
That actuated me when bo't.

10.

Nay, in that tiny cord which cracks,
There's that tingle to the flax
Which might change my little present
Into something not so pleasant.

11.

To the hand that wears the glove
It was as the "olive branch and dove";
But where would all this giving lead?
Came this thought about the steed.

12.

Then, as I mused along the lane,
I bethought me of the pain
That the thing I'd chosen with such care
Might give my other friend, the mare!

13.

'Twas a puzzle to know just what to do,
To please number one and not offend number two;
For it would follow, as a matter of course,
That the gift to the master would be a gift to the horse.

14.

I thought of my frolics as a lad,
What fun! but nay,—there was the gad!
Ah! in the plucking of pleasure 'tis a difficult thing
To rifle the roses and not find a sting!

15.

And yet, in expressing all I feel
For the faithful friend who spins the wheel,
There was still another tribulation
Besides the one of flagellation.

16.

How could I temper a thing to fear
To make it fit for what is dear?
And cause the lash which goads a team
To bear a tribute of esteem?

17.

There's much in a gift,—it all avails,
There's the joy, the remembrance it entails
And like the refrain of some loved song,
The *air* remains though the singer's gone.

18.

Ah, well, the good or bad of the invention
Had no place in my intention,
And despite the pang in its design,
Might it touch a chord that is divine.

19.

I need not say 'twas Woodward's best,
For that, indeed, you might have guessed,
And though once it bristled amongst the thorns,
As the symbol of progress it now adorns.

20.

Whilst the paltry sum for which it sold
Was insignificant in gold,
The price that's paid was not so mean,
As it bore the likeness of a queen.

21.

Nor as the emblem of God-speed
Is it without its little meed,
As to that place we hold most dear
It goes so far to bring us near.

22.

These are the words I've sought to rhyme
And with a lash to intertwine,
To make the offering of good fellowship,
Accord with the present of a whip.

23.

If in giving that which flicks the flies,
I've sought such words as melodize,
'Twas to lighten the journey up the hill
With this little song o' the whip-o'-WILL.*

* William.



Mine and Thine.

PART II.

THE *LITTLE MIGHT*.

1.

As we're told of brevity, "'tis the soul of wit"
 It's well to pause if we make a hit;
 But like the sportsman who wings a lark,
 We look about for a better mark.

2.

Journeying onward to the final goal,
 We find peace and comfort in the briar-bowl,
 And inspired by the fumes of its witching fire,
 Retune the strings of our slackened lyre!

3.

And thoughts akin to those before,
Come to replenish our little store;
But those of the whip were all so tame,
We reserved our charge for higher game.

4.

Not that the thoughts which there found tongue
Would belittle the theme it sung;
But plums that have fallen, we let be,
To see what's higher up the tree.

5.

As in the case of that silken tip,
Where we blended friendship with a whip,
There's that in Nature's alchemy
To make a charm of all we see.

6.

In what was made of the simple reed,
We find the growth of another seed,
Whose blossoms for all who seek for them,
Excel the beauty of the fairest gem.

7.

At the sight of the crawling worm,
We see naught to admire but all to spurn,
But watch it with a kindly eye,
It turns—to a gorgeous butterfly.

8.

In the case of the presentation,
All was joy and gratulation,
And what we add to the happier lot,
Is not all a bauble forget-me-not.

10.

Ah ! If from such festive scenes you turn your eyes
You see humanity in another guise,
And where the pang of hunger nips
We stint the purse that buys the whips.

11.

If Heaven's reward is worth the living,
May it not be had in giving,
And the gift of a life which all adorns,
Found immortality in a "Crown of *Thorns*."

12.

That the man whose work his wants supply
Is deserving much, we don't deny ;
But there is a stint which brings a draught
Beyond the reach of handicraft.

13.

Here, knowledge, skill, and all tuition
Yield their place to intuition,
And doubling all that they may count,
The gift and the giving are paramount.

14.

I do not mean those larger sums
Which seek a monument in the "funds,"
And beguiling Charity all for renown
Leave the helpless where they're found.

15.

Far better is the meagre sum
Bestowed when the giver's on the run ;
He may not stop to inscribe his name,
But it goes on record all the same.

16.

To give a fortune all in one,
As to pamper pride is often done,
Is to make the charge, as in a fort,
Boom with the thunder of a loud report.

17.

As crumbs which go to the feathery piper,
'Tis little kindnesses that make life lighter,
And even the smallest little mite
May yield a banquet of delight.

18.

While in the mite which we bestow
Some think they're planting in the snow,
'Tis Bounty's loam and germinates,
The flowers that bloom at the "PEARLY GATES."

19.

As in the soil where all is dearth
We find the richest gems on earth,
So in the place where all is need
Does our tribute plant its seed.

20.

There'll be no treasure in that brighter day
When all life's trophies have vanished away,
And the greatest wealth in what is mine
Is found in the boon which makes it thine !

21.

There is nothing in all we cherish
That in the keeping does not perish,
And the prize of highest achievement
Turns to ashes in bereavement.

22.

Ah, but there's a trophy of another kind,
Where all must perish we may find ;
Conceived in Charity, it will live,
And have its birth in what we give.



